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**DODDRIDGE'S
SACRAMENTAL
THOUGHTS.**

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THOUGHTS

E. B. Hallam
ON

SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS

EXTRACTED FROM THE

DIARY OF THE REV. PHILIP DODDRIDGE, D.D.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION

BY

JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.

First American from the London Tract Society's Edition.



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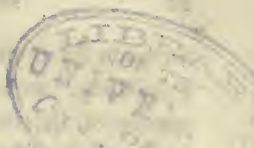
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INTRODUCTION.

THE part which I have assumed, in respect to the following pages, is a very humble one. It is not the presumptuous folly of helping forward a work of Doctor Doddridge, in public esteem; but only an attempt to elucidate a sort of composition which is somewhat unusual. It is believed that the Meditations which are subjoined may be useful, not only to private Christians, but to ministers of the gospel.

It has been questioned, with great justice, whether the keeping of a religious diary, from day to day, in the usual form, is on the whole conducive to simplicity, lowliness, and candour, in Christian experience. It is equally questionable, whether the private exercises of a soul, in communion with its God, should be dragged forth, and published to the day; especially in cases where the author had sedulously endeavoured concealment, by the use of a cipher. There can however be

no room for query, touching the injustice of publishing, without purgation, the private papers of Dr. Doddridge, eighty years after his death, by his great grandson, John Doddridge Humphreys, Esq.* These five volumes, of letters and journals, contain, as might be expected, a fund of valuable information; but much also which should have been consigned to oblivion. The life of the author was a true progress. Between the earliest and the latest effusions there is a striking contrast. Over the juvenile levities of the first letters, which are heartlessly published by a latitudinarian, perhaps a Unitarian, descendant, the venerable writer would no doubt have blushed and wept. The great body of the subsequent communications are such as might well befit a man of God. In the diary there is nothing but what is edifying.

The little book here offered is a selection

* "The Correspondence and Diary of Philip Doddridge, D. D., illustrative of various particulars in his life hitherto unknown; with notices of many of his contemporaries; and a sketch of the Ecclesiastical History of the times in which he lived. Edited from the original MSS. By his great grandson, John Doddridge Humphreys, Esq., London, 1831, five volumes, 8vo."

from the private Diary of Doctor Doddridge, prepared for the Religious Tract Society of London. For its merits and defects they are responsible. It appears to have been compiled from the last volume of the large work just mentioned: though only a part of the sacramental compositions are here given. The original papers extend over a period, between the ninth of March, 1728, and the second of June, 1751; in other words, from the twenty-sixth year of the author's life, until the year of his decease. The entries in these private volumes were not daily, nor even weekly: they much more resemble the species of diary, judiciously recommended by Jay, in his *Life of Winter*. They are more properly devout compositions; records of great and critical facts in providential history; or meditations at times of unusual devotion.

“It has been observed in the Preface,” says Mr. Humphreys, “that this Diary is not that daily record which the name implies. It contains, in the first instance, Memoranda of Remarkable Incidents in the Life of Dr. Doddridge; and, in the second, his Sacramental Meditations. Of the latter devout reflections, no difference of opinion can exist, they are

full of that holy fervour and deep humility for which their pious author was so preeminently distinguished.”*

It was the custom of Dr. Doddridge to make serious preparation for the solemnities of sacramental days. As an instance, passages might be cited from a meditation bearing date October, 1730. From this it appears, that by devotional reading and prayer, accompanied with fasting, he endeavoured to bring his mind into a frame suitable to the engagements of so tender an occasion. As no part of this work has been reprinted in America, it may be allowable to insert a sentence or two; from which the reader will perceive the manner in which religion is made to mingle itself with the author's private concerns, and particularly with his pastoral services. After detailing a number of devotional acts, he says: “I then prayed for further grace, and referred to God that dear and important concern which will speedily be determined, and with it, in all probability, much of my future views of happiness in life. I then read some excellent things in Baxter, about conquering the fear of death, with

* Correspondence and Diary, vol. v., p. 248.

which I was more affected than by any thing that had passed before in the day. I concluded with a prayer for others, and a thanksgiving to God; after which I went and made some visits; prayed I know not how many times abroad, with my sick friends, and spent the evening in writing a letter to Mr. Clark, expounded in the family, and attended to secret devotion.”*

The subsequent pages show, that as he advanced in life, Doctor Doddridge was led to feel a sympathy more and more warm, in sacramental exercises, with those who were under his pastoral charge. For the sake of young ministers who may read these sentences, it may not be unprofitable to add, that such communion with one's flock tends very much towards faithfulness and comfort in parochial labour. Late in life, our author's retrospection of these services was humble and edifying. In a letter of date December 15, 1748, he thus writes: “I have often, in as melting a manner as I could, and as knowing the terrors of the Lord, entreated my hearers to be reconciled to God; and perhaps few preachers have abounded more in ad-

* Correspondence and Diary, vol. v., p. 293.

dresses of that kind. Nor have I ever knowingly and deliberately kept back any thing which I considered as the counsel of God to them; though I have indeed in many instances waved controversies, from principles of conscience, and not either of indolence or of cowardice, if I have known my own heart. But I freely own, I have not warned from house to house, with a zeal and tenderness like that which I could wish; though many houses, and I suppose I might add, many scores of houses, have been witness to tears of tenderness with which I have at different times admonished or entreated particular persons. But here I think has been my greatest defect, that there are many whom I have not so warned, and many days, and some weeks, in which I have done very little this way.”*

These unpremeditated and strictly private effusions should in justice be regarded as casual fragments, and not as a deliberate series of aids for preparation. That the learned and pious author had sometimes projected a more complete work of this kind, might be gathered from a meditation on New

Year's day, 1750. "I think," says he in this place, "I shall neither publish Sacramental Meditations nor Hymns; yet I may perhaps do something towards getting them in some forwardness."* The Hymns, to which allusion is here made, were gathered after the death of the author, and published by his friend, the Rev. Job Orton.

Doctor Doddridge never attained old age. When we look at his amazing labours, we should remember, that they were accomplished before he reached the term of forty-nine years. He was carried off by consumption, and died at Lisbon, October 26th, O. S. 1751. The bright example of his life, and the yet more brilliant illumination of his dying hours, are already familiar to the Christian public, by means of the Memoir by Mr. Orton. There are many other devotional passages which might be extracted with advantage from his posthumous papers; but these seemed to promise peculiar usefulness, from their being susceptible of a uniform arrangement. Unless the writer is alone in the experience of former years, it is too common for young ministers to approach this most solemn rite of our Christianity, with less preparation of

* Volume v., p. 492.

thought than is usual in reference to an ordinary sermon. When such culpable negligence prevails, it is not to be expected that the ordinance will long retain its savour.

The remark is frequently made, that sacramental occasions have not the same interest which they had in former years. It is believed by the writer, that the complaint is not unfounded. In ridding the ordinance of that burdensome extent of service, which was justly chargeable on the old Scottish method, the fast, the repeated preparatory services, the discourses on successive days, and the tedious serving of table after table, we have on the other hand lost much that was comely, and glowing, and delightful. How many of us recall, with a pensive satisfaction, the impressions made even on our infant minds by the solemnities of a sacrament, as dispensed in our earlier days, and particularly in those parts of the country where Scottish Presbyterianism most prevailed. Such occasions were infrequent, in rural parishes, from the necessity of the case. They were sought, as they still are in Scotland, and in a measure among Scottish people here, by multitudes, from all the country side. Ministers of the gospel came to-

gether in large numbers, and amidst circumstances the best fitted to awaken high emotions, and cultivate kindly affections. There was a part for every one, in the days of continued service, and in the addresses delivered, where the method of sitting around a proper table was observed. Aged Christians who may read these lines will acknowledge, that memory can recall no seasons in which there was so much of the manifestation of God in his sanctuary, as in these great sacramental gatherings. Whole assemblies were often bathed in tears, and moved as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind. The holy sympathy could not but extend itself to the speakers on these occasions. The repercussive influence from a profoundly touched assembly is more productive of eloquence than all the canons of rhetorical schools; and the unpremeditated gush, over the sacramental emblems, has been worth more than the elaborate lucubration of weeks, which the preacher had brought in his manuscript. These were times of revivals; and it is by means of the extraordinary assemblages, and penetrating influence of such communions, that the chief advances of our church were made. These were days of gladness, when

the beauty of Zion was admired of her sons, and when thousands were brought to acknowledge Christ. And, whatever may be thought of the admission, I hesitate not to own, that we have gained nothing as a church, by magnifying the convenience and the decorum of ordinances, at the expense of fervour and joyfulness and life.

Those who are familiar with the history of our church, will call to mind abundant verifications of the statement, that times of communion have, in a remarkable degree, been times of increase. The wonderful case of John Livingston is fresh in many minds. He was the ancestor of the Livingston family of New York, and an eminent minister in Scotland and Ireland in the early part of the seventeenth century. The discourse which is so remarkable was delivered in the churchyard of the kirk of Shotts, on "a Monday after the communion," June 21, 1630. "The night before," says Mr. Livingston, "*I had been with some Christians, who spent the night in prayer and conference.* When I was alone in the fields, about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, before we were to go to sermon, there came such a misgiving spirit upon me, considering my unworthiness

and weakness, and the expectation of the people, that I was consulting with myself to have stolen away somewhere, and declined that day's preaching, but that I thought I durst not so far distrust God, and so went to sermon, and got good assistance, about an hour and a half, upon the points which I had meditated on. Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26. And in the end, offering to close with some words of exhortation, I was led on about an hour's time, in a strain of exhortation and warning, with such liberty and melting of heart, as I never had the like in public all my lifetime." Now from any thing which Mr. Livingston says of himself, no man would be led to suspect that even a single soul had been awakened by this sermon. Yet John Brown, of Haddington, (illustrious, venerable name!) gives a testimony, which is moreover pertinent to the general strain of our remarks. Speaking of those times of persecution, he says: "Meanwhile faithful ministers were remarkably countenanced of God at their sacramental and other occasions. Multitudes crowded to their communions; and being eager to hear as much of the gospel as they could, when they had an opportunity of it, they began to have one ser-

mon upon Saturday before, another on the Monday after. Mr. John Livingston, a probationer, after having been so far off, that morning, preached a sermon at the kirk of Shotts, on Monday, June 21, *at which five hundred* were converted to Christ.”*

Tradition informs us of the vast assemblages which were attracted to sacramental services, under the ministry of the Tennents, Blairs, and Smiths, of a former day. These were times of great increase to our church, and they were connected with blessings on communion-services. In our own day, there are portions of the country, where the ancient zeal in regard to sacramental means is fully maintained, and where they still are festivals of gracious communication. And where Presbyteries are used to meet at the Lord's table, and to enjoy their mutual gifts of instruction and devotion, all concerned will readily witness, that the happiest results have ensued. Indeed it may be questioned, whether ministers and elders can meet year after year, *solely for business*, without the growth of hard, dry, distant, and secular feelings toward one another. These feelings would give way to others of a more

* History of the Church of Scotland, p. 98.

genial sort, among the memorials of Christ's love.

It is not intended, by these remarks, to reproduce the obsolete forms. We have forms enough already: and the era of careful, decorous, liturgical enactment, is usually that of coldness, worldliness, and decay. It would ensure no good end to restore four-days-meetings, fasts, successive tables, numerous addresses, or any measures or ceremonies, however proper, without the spirit which informed them. But it is meant, and that very distinctly, to express a desire for a more careful, earnest, and affectionate observance of the Lord's Supper.

There are many who feel—though delicacy has somewhat repressed remark on this point—that there is danger lest, in certain quarters, the proper and genuine import of this Sacrament should be altogether lost sight of. Many who read these lines will call to mind occasions, in which the Lord Jesus Christ, in his priestly character, has scarcely been mentioned at his own table. Every thing, in such cases, may be true, orthodox, instructive, solemn, nay even edifying—yet not sacramental, evangelical, tending to the cross. The very solemnity of these occasions

may be harsh, and legal. The grand, characteristic idea of the ordinance, A SUFFERING MESSIAH, may be superseded by another, which however valuable, is not the appropriate one. Has it not become, in certain churches, a common thing for the minister to leave the *Atonement*, that is to say, the principal subject of this memorial, to be gathered out of the words of institution, while he spends his whole strength upon the important but secondary topics of vow, covenant, engagement, obligation to the church, solemn professions, and the like. Let it not be suspected, that we would silence the latter; but we would earnestly desire that the appropriate and cardinal doctrine of this ordinance should have its due place.

It is a very serious consideration for us who minister, that the tone and character of sacramental assemblies will bear a general proportion to the nature of the instructions which fall from our lips at such seasons. The "Action Sermon" of the days of our fathers may have been a formal, unwieldy, even a superstitious thing; but then it was sure to contain the principal thing, CHRIST. Although we can all testify with satisfaction that it is far otherwise with the majority of

our churches, yet it is lamentably true, that in some congregations, the people have come to expect no particular reference to the work of expiation, in the sermon before the communion. And then, what a change in the addresses at the sacrament itself! Time was, when the chief outbursts of affectionate, holy eloquence took place at these times; and when the assembled worshippers were lifted up in sympathy with the varied emotions of their leaders. Such addresses to the people were remembered and talked of, for a life-time. But they presupposed a work of ardent piety in the speaker. It is this thought which connects our train of remark with the little book before us; and its republication, it is believed, will prove useful to young ministers.

The fragments which fill the ensuing pages are like the filings of gold or the dust of diamonds. They are not specimens either of reasoning or of style: they were never meant for the eye of the stranger. But they reveal to us, in a most pleasing manner, the views of their eminent author, in relation to this important part of his ministerial work. They serve to show how far he was from lapsing into a lukewarm, official, customary,

routine, in his approaches to this holy table. Especially do they remind us who are office-bearers in Christ's house, that our public utterances, to be warm and efficient, must flow from an inward fount of feeling. Those of Doddridge did so. The hints which he penned down, of sacramental addresses, on returning to his study, were records of feelings granted to him, as he often acknowledges, *while he was at the table*. This will account for the richness and pungent quality existing in some of them, even under rude diction, beyond what we usually observe in the even tenour of his elaborate works. No wonder : there are no thoughts ever given to the preacher, so vivid and penetrative, as those which come to his lips warm from the instant affection of the heart. The reader will be fully aware of our meaning, if he will examine, in the following pages, the record of the Fifty-Seventh Sacrament ; where, after a brief sketch of the remarks uttered, the author adds, in terms which show that it was not merely doctrine, but experience : "Such were the workings of my heart at this most delightful and edifying ordinance. O that it may prove not only as a transient blaze of the spirits ! but that the happy con-

sequences of it may go along with me into all the devotions, and into all the services, that lie before me this month; and that I may be prepared for all the will of God."

It is worthy of note, by candidates for the ministry, that in these addresses, there is a remarkable variety. The great danger of extemporaneous effusions, any where, is that of sameness and self-repetition. But when one is summoned, at intervals of some length, to utter himself, in *the presence of the same associations*, it is almost impossible to avoid this evil. So that there are some ministers, whose hearers can prognosticate the general strain of their teachings, on any given occasion. Dr. Doddridge happily escapes this; and by a method well worthy of being employed in all cases which fall under this rule, such as baptisms, funerals, prayer-meetings, addresses to inquirers, and even advice to those who are ill or dying; it is to connect the observations, directly and legitimately, with some text of Scripture. This, when joined with the felicitous burst of sudden emotion, will ensure a novelty and striking force of thought. How far from the arid desertions of our common Sabbaths, are such experiences as are here recorded! What a prepa-

ration, at home, for successful work abroad ! “I must record this day” says he, “as one of the most blessed of my life. God was pleased to meet me in my secret retirement in the morning, and poured into my soul such a flood of consolation in the exercises of faith and love, as I was hardly able to sustain. It would have been a relief to me to have been able even to have uttered strong cries of joy. O, how did I then wish for a melodious voice, and how gladly could I have made earth and heaven re-echo with praise ! Family devotion was unutterably sweet ; and although the pleasure of my sermon was much interrupted by an accidental disorder that happened in my throat while I was speaking, yet I bless God, that the sacramental attendance and the evening services were all beyond expression sweet. My soul was full of God, and of heaven.”

There is an obvious improvement in the character of these devotions, as they go on, which cannot fail to strike the observant reader. They extend over a lapse of about twenty years. It needs but a glance at the original diaries, to show that the earlier years of record offered much to be improved : the later ones are full of ripening experience.

For some years before his death Dr. Doddridge laboured under bodily infirmities, which would have absolved most men from all active service. In 1743, he was seized with illness, at the very administration of the Lord's Supper.

“Indeed,” he thus writes on his return home, “I was not without some thoughts, but that I might have taken my flight from the table of Christ upon earth to his presence above. Cold clammy sweats were upon me; but if, as some said, a mortal paleness seemed fixed upon my cheek, I hope I can say that glory was in my soul. I revived a little, and felt an unutterable sweetness in singing the hymn on the words of good old Simeon, as rendered by dear Dr. Watts; and I must say, that all the pleasure, which I might have had in a better state of health and spirits, in the after part of the ordinance, was far overbalanced by the unutterable delight which I enjoyed in consequence of being so interrupted. I cannot but think, that it was in some measure owing to the great fervour of my spirit in the former duties of the day, that this failure now happened, and I humbly hope that I may say, that I was in some degree consumed with the love of God.

Gracious Lord, I thank thee for the visitation, and for the support under it. I thank thee that I am thine, in life or in death. And I humbly renew the solemn dedication of myself unto thee, as in a holy tranquillity of soul, and undissembled readiness to be disposed of as thou pleasest in this world, or in a better."

The private Christian will find himself profited, in preparation for the Lord's table, by this unpretending volume; in which there is nothing wearisome, because there is nothing laboured. But the minister of the gospel—if any such will condescend to learn from this little book—may derive many valuable hints, as to the conduct of this very important part of public duty; in regard to the manner of preparation for it, the topics proper to be presented, and the mode of illustration.

It would not be easy to find a better conclusion to these remarks, than what our author has furnished us, in speaking of this very ordinance: "It is the memorial of the death of Christ, by which we represent it to others, and to ourselves. May we be ever ready to give this most regular and acceptable token, that we are not ashamed to fight

under the banner of a crucified Redeemer! It is also the seal of the new covenant in his blood. Let us adore the grace that formed and ratified that everlasting covenant, so well ordered in all things, and so sure. And whenever we approach to this sealing ordinance, may we render our consent to the demands of that covenant, and our expectations of those blessings which are conveyed by it! a consent and application so well suited to the circumstances its being ratified by the blood of Jesus. Thus may every attendance nourish our souls in grace, and ripen them for glory; that at length all may be fulfilled and perfected in the kingdom of God."

J. W. A.

THOUGHTS

ON

SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS.

MEDITATION I.

BEFORE MY FOURTH SACRAMENT, JULY 5, 1730.

Humiliations of soul before God, and invocations for his assistance and mercy.

As I am preparing for the table of the Lord, and my intended journey, I would seriously think of my business with God, in regard to each. I come to the sacred table humbly to receive a renewed pardon for my renewed and aggravated transgressions. I come, to seal those sacred engagements into which I entered myself on my birthday. I come, to get a lively view of Christ by faith; that, having him crucified and set forth before me, I may thereby be engaged to obey the truth, according to the exhortations I am giving to others, and which I earnestly pray God to seal home upon my own soul. I come, to refer to him all the future concerns of my life, and particularly the continuance of it,—and of my health, and capacity for usefulness. I come, to ask his assist-

ance in the cultivation of the several branches of learning which lie before me; and in that great design for the defence and improvement of Christianity, which has been the subject of so many of my late thoughts. I come, to commit myself to his care in this journey; to beg preservation from all the snares and temptations of it; and a continued adherence of soul to him. And I come to ask his direction in that great concern, the choice of a companion for life. May he preserve me from being misled by any of those foolish passions to which I know that I am naturally obnoxious. I would solemnly engage myself to a care in secret devotion, to be watchful over my thoughts, my heart, my appetites, and my words; and I humbly depend upon him, to lead me and guide me; to prosper my way before me, and to make such provisions for the supply of my wants as he knows that I may need. He is my covenant Father and Friend; may he never leave me nor forsake me, and may I never depart from him!

MEDITATION II.

AT THE LORD'S TABLE THIS DAY.

*Of the union and communion of the soul with Christ by faith,
and of the emotions of gratitude it should inspire.*

GOD favoured me with very uncommon enlargement of soul; which I desire to mention to the glory of his grace. I began with that question of God to Elijah, "What dost thou here?" 1 Kings xix. 9; and observed how careful we should be to

be able to answer it in every circumstance of life; and with what peculiar pleasure and cheerfulness we might answer it here; since we come to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God;—that flesh which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed. And then, from these words, I proceeded to consider, having briefly explained what it was, with what expectations, and with what resolutions we should feed upon this divine banquet. For the expectations; they may be founded on the promises connected with that passage of Scripture, wherein Christ tells us, that if any man thus eat and drink, he “dwelleth in me, and I in him:” John vi. 56; which signifies the most intimate union and delightful communion. It is a pleasure on both sides. Christ will dwell in that soul! To have been visited by Christ in the days of his flesh, how great an honour! “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but if thou wilt come, no prince shall be so welcome.” Now he comes; and comes not like a wayfaring man, that turns in but for a night, but as a constant inhabitant. And he says, “he dwelleth in me.” I do not only give him a transient look; entertain a kind thought of him in the hour of my conversion, or at the time of my entrance on the world of spirits; but he has a constant possession of my soul. He dwells in me, even before I dwell in glory. How delightful a thought, to think we are at this moment dwelling in Christ! Again,—“I will give him eternal life!” Life eternal! How vast the import! Not one day’s, one year’s, one age’s enjoyment; but an immortality of happiness! It is true that the body must die. These bodies that are now going to receive this sacred food, shall soon fall into a

ruin, undistinguished from that of those who never knew a Redeemer; undistinguished from that of those who despised him. As the Israelites ate manna in the wilderness, and are dead, so shall we be who are now eating this bread of life. Yet still it deserves that name, for the soul shall *live*—live, and look down without terror, without sorrow, on the mouldering clay, especially when it is secure of a glorious resurrection! For that follows—"I will raise him up at the last day!" John vi. 54. In consequence of this blessed promise, we, when feeding upon Christ by faith may apply to ourselves all the great and illustrious things which the Scripture says of the resurrection. We shall bear the image of the heavenly Adam, we shall be raised incorruptible! This mortal shall put on immortality, and these vile bodies shall be changed. And it surely increases the pleasure of the prospect that Christ shall effect it. "I will raise him up!" Well, then, may he say, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed:" as if there were nothing else that deserved to be called meat and drink in comparison. With these expectations should we eat; and these expectations may instruct us in correspondent resolutions. Let us come with resolutions of maintaining this union; of delighting in it; of using the faculties of our souls, and the members of our bodies, as what are to be for ever glorious with God in heaven.

As for the returns of gratitude, and of love, they are natural. Would Christ dispense with them, and give us a liberty of sinning, the holy soul would decline it with horror.

While breaking the bread, I discoursed of the free love of Christ. "What could deserve all

this?"—I appealed to conscience in pouring out the wine. "Had we shed the blood of Jesus, what self-resentment would have attended it! what the guilt of having drawn down such agonies on the Son of God! Let us not increase it by trampling his mercy under foot."

When taking the cup I observed: "Shall I be ashamed of a public engagement? No!—Were the whole world of men and angels assembled, I would glory in it; that I am the disciple of the crucified Jesus; and that I receive this sacred cup in token of my sincere resolution of devoting to him all I am and have—of being his for time, and his for eternity."

MEDITATION III.

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

Feelings of contrition for the sufferings of the Saviour when viewed as the consequence of personal and general transgression.

I HAVE so long neglected to write out the hints of this discourse, that I have almost forgotten it. I know that I began with the words of Zechariah, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." Zech. xii. 10. I recommended to our consideration the Person pierced; and who we are that have done it! How deeply we have pierced him; and how often we have pierced him. We have looked upon him and pierced him; and then looked upon him again, and again pierced him. He might have pierced us: yet he is looking upon us as upon Peter. O may our hearts feel that

look! Let us now look upon him with a resolution of piercing him no more, but rather of bringing forward his murderers, and of slaying them before him.

In breaking the bread, I used these words; "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Gen. xxii. 7. The sacrifice approved of God, is a broken heart;—here are materials to set it on fire, but where is the heart? Lord, send down fire from heaven, or this will not catch. How cold are our hearts to thee! But then shall we offer, as we hope, a sacrifice acceptable through Christ.

MEDITATION IV.

THE SIXTH SACRAMENT. SEPTEMBER 6, 1730.

Solemn and earnest supplications for greater faith, and a more immediate sense of the Divine presence.

I HAVE been very careless in recording, and much more careless in conducting the actions of the last month. I have done little for God; I have enjoyed little of him; I have sinned frequently against him; and have, on the whole, gone on much as I did before, only rather with less remorse, when I have fallen into some shameful instances of self-indulgence. I have now the Lord's supper again in view. O that I might be brought thither with a broken heart, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite spirit for my many and deeply aggravated sins! I have been lately reading of the "life of faith." I want more of that blessed principle,

and then it would excite repentance. O blessed Spirit! graciously descend on my polluted heart. Strike the flint, O thou almighty arm of the Lord, that the waters of life may flow forth.

I come to humble myself before God; I come, to renew my resolutions against sin; I come, to refer my concerns to him; I come, to seal my engagements to be the Lord's, and to prosecute with greater vigour the duties of a pastor, of a tutor, a student, and a friend. Lord, do thou instruct me in them: Lord, do thou animate me to them.

O thou Searcher of hearts, I appeal to thee. Have I a wish so predominant in my soul as this; that I may be thy faithful servant? Would I not ten thousand times rather be free from the corruptions of my own heart than from all the calamities of this mortal life? Would I not rather live in the warmest exercise of holy love, in the most vigorous prosecution of thy service—than to live in a round of sensual indulgences, or in the pursuit of the most curious speculative amusements, although I were sure that I should be ever so successful in them now, and not be brought to any reckoning for them at last?

My God! when thou renewest the least taste of thy love—when I find, though but for a few hasty, interrupted moments, the pleasure of conversing with thee, I say, "It is good for me to be here." Here, O Lord, would I pitch my tabernacle; and rather dwell in the meanest cottage with thee, than in the most stately palace without thy favour. May I not hope that thou hast not yet forsaken me. O, return to me in love;—visit me this day at thy house, and at thy table, and, for thy name's sake, continue to lead me, and to guide me. Res-

cue me when I am beginning to wander; awaken me when I slumber; strengthen me when I faint; and let not all my prayers, my sermons, my private exhortations, my secret and public transactions with thee, issue at last in my aggravated ruin. Let me, if it be thy will, be separated from all that is dearest to me here; but, O my dear, my compassionate and forgiving Father, let me never, never be separated from thee.—Amen.

MEDITATION V.

AT THE TABLE OF THE LORD, SEPTEMBER 6, 1730.

Christ viewed as an atoning Sacrifice.

THE principal part of my discourse at the table of the Lord this evening was a meditation on these words, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John i. 29. He is the Lamb. He is the Lamb of God; sent, appointed, approved by him. And he takes away sin;—not only some little, slight offences, but all sin: he has merit enough to take away those of the whole world! Behold him, with a sense, of the malignity of that sin, which it needed the blood of such a Lamb to expiate. Behold it, with an apprehension of the goodness of God in appointing him for a sacrifice; with a becoming regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, who submitted himself to death for us; and with an entire dependence upon him. Lord, I lay my sins on the head of this great sacrifice; content to lie forever under them, if there be not merit enough in him to expiate

them all. Behold him, with a resolution to maintain becoming regards to him for the future; and in the expectation of seeing the Lamb upon his throne, and of ascribing eternal adorations to him.

In breaking the bread, I observed, the goodness of God in frequently repeating this solemnity.

In the prayer, I considered it as an engagement to live and die to the Lord;—and as an encouragement to hope that we shall be the Lord's both in life and in death; declaring our dependence upon God, that he would perform his part of the covenant, and upon his grace, that we might perform ours.



MEDITATION VI.

ON THE THIRTEENTH SACRAMENT, APRIL 18, 1731.

The guilt and helplessness of humanity—the need of a Redeemer—the readiness of Christ to suffer for the salvation of the world, with thoughts on the promptitude to love and duty which his mercy should inspire.

I BEGAN with some introductory remarks on these words of the apostle: “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!” Heb. x. 4, 6, 7.

The words lead us into some affecting views of God, and of ourselves, and of the blessed Redeemer.

We see ourselves, as condemned creatures, in

the presence of a holy God; and we see the Divine justice, rigorous in its demands. It must have blood. Helpless in ourselves, we had no atoning blood to offer. In this sense, Lebanon would not have been sufficient to burn, nor all the beasts thereof for a burnt offering. And how dreadful must our case have been, had it rested there, and had we continued in the circumstances of those, for whom there is no sacrifice for sin! But God has provided a Lamb. Then he said, "Lo, I come!" It is affecting to think, to what purpose, and with what temper he came. With what purpose did he come? He might have uttered these words in another view. Had God declared from his awful throne, "Man, ungrateful man, is risen up in rebellion against me, and I will make him the monument of my wrath, even as are the fallen angels; and who, of all the inhabitants of this blessed world, will rise up for me against these workers of iniquity?—into whose hand shall I put the flaming sword, which is to be bathed in their blood, and the poison of which is to drink up their spirits." In this sense might our Lord have answered, "Lo, I come!—Father, I undertake the work." But it was not so. He "sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved!" John iii. 17. A design directly contrary to that which our guilt might have taught us to fear. He came to deliver us, and that at a very expensive rate, even at the price of his own life. Amazing goodness! more than can be uttered! more than be conceived! And how did he come? With cheerfulness, and even with eagerness. "Then said I, Lo, I come!—I come to do thy will, O God, and, Thy law is within mine

heart." It was wonderful that he should even say, "Father, I consent to do it. Yet, if it must be so, if the demands of thy justice be so inflexible, and so that it seems good in thy sight, then I submit." Had he said, too, as afterwards in the days of feeble flesh, and under the struggles of human nature, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" Matt. xxvi. 39—but behold, he came with pleasure, as one "leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills." He triumphed, in a view that seemed so full of horror; and doubled the favour by the cheerful air with which he bestowed it. "Lo, I come! Be the work ever so painful, the consequences are so glorious, the scheme is so full of compassion, so merciful to man, so honourable to Thee, that I long to accomplish it;" as afterwards he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Luke xii. 50. With such a strong desire have I desired to eat of this passover. Many a passover had he eaten before, in the thirty years of his abode upon the earth. Some had he before eaten of with his disciples; but none on which his heart was so set as on this;—and wherefore? because this was that at which he was to enter upon his sufferings, and to fulfil the great, the glorious design for the redemption of fallen man. It is delightful in this view to look on this delight of Christ in such an undertaking; and it is delightful to see the consequences. "By the which will," says the apostle, "we are sanctified." Heb. x. 10. He might have said, by which "will" ye are saved; by which "will" ye are justified. But he says, by which ye are sanctified;—and let us not imagine this to be less comfortable, for, by a most inseparable

consequence, it implies the rest, and thus intimates them in a more affecting manner than if they had been further expressed. Such is the connexion between holiness and glory, between sanctification in this world and complete salvation in the next, that when I have observed that the offer of Christ is sufficient to accomplish the one, I need not add that it will infallibly fulfil the other. How joyful a reflection is this, to those who find, by Divine grace, that they are already sanctified through this offering up of the body of Christ once for all! A glorious work, without which it would never have been accomplished. The design was so great, so wonderful, that it may well be introduced with that mark of attention, "Lo, I come!"—Let us behold it, and let us behold it with wonder. And do thou behold it, O my heavenly Father. Nor did the all-comprehending eye of God ever see a sight more worthy its regard. "Lo, I come!"—Ought it not, my friends, to excite some correspondent emotions in our hearts! and should not our souls echo back this gracious language? Methinks that we should be putting ourselves in a waiting posture; looking to God, and to our blessed Redeemer, for every intimation of his pleasure with regard to what he would have us to do, or to bear; and that when he is, as it were, beckoning with his hand, and pointing out the way, we should answer, with a triumphant pleasure, "Lo, I come. I delight to do thy will, O God, and thy law is within my heart." May the ordinance we now attend be subservient to these pious resolutions, and be the means of bestowing that grace, whereby alone they can be rendered effectual.

In breaking the bread I said—Thus was the

body of Christ broken! As it is said, "The Lord is risen," he is risen indeed; so, the Lord was crucified, he was crucified indeed. As surely as this bread is broken, so surely was the body of Christ extended, and his blood poured out upon the cross. And is this a sight to be seen with indifference? Was it thus that the Lord of life was used? One would have imagined that he should have met with the most thankful reception; and that after his appearing in the world, all the contention among the children of men should have been, as to who should have done him the greatest honour, and who should have offered him the most valuable tribute. And was he insulted and reviled? was he tortured and murdered? was he used like a villain and like a slave, with every circumstance of cruelty and contempt? And shall our hearts behold this sight without emotion? especially when we have to add, that he thus loved us, and gave up himself for us?—Why have we the power of remembrance, if not to remember Christ? Why have we hearts susceptible of humanity and generosity, if not to be employed here? Why have we tears to shed, if they are not to be poured out on such an occasion? Better, O blessed Jesus, a thousand times better were it that we had neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor tongues to speak, nor power to breathe, than that our hearts should not be filled with love to thee, our tongues employed in thy praises, and all our powers, both of soul and of body, be forever devoted to thy service.

In pouring out the cup, I said, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!" If we were the first sinners who had ever ventured upon his grace, here would be an encouragement to do so, when we consider who

this Lamb of God is. But, blessed thought, we are treading in a beaten way. O, if the world of glory were thrown open to our survey, what a surprising sight would it present! We should there see thousands of splendid and glorious creatures, concerning whom, if the Divine revelation did not assure us of it, we could never have imagined that they had ever dwelt in clay; so bright, so glorious, so like to the angels—so like to God! One could hardly imagine that they were once struggling, mourning, weeping, and trembling, even as are we. And when we wish to inquire into their change, let us ask the blessed angels; and they will tell us,—“They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Rev. vii. 14. Let us ask them, and they will reply, “Christ hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Rev. i. 5. And is there not, then, the greatest reason most cheerfully to repose ourselves upon Him?

We are now conversing with that God, who knows the heart and searches the reins! There is something awful and delightful in the thought. Let every creature in this assembly consider it. He knows the heart?—how awful a thought to the careless sinner! He knows that I am here present in his house without any serious regard to him, or desire after him. The Lord knows that all the solemnities of a sacrament day cannot warm and melt my frozen, stony heart. He knows that I prefer the amusement of every vain thought, to all those contemplations which might delightfully employ the mind of an angel? But to the pious soul, it is a thought of comfort. My beloved, when we have lively views of the Re-

deemer's love, I am persuaded that sentiments arise in our souls too great for the most emphatic language to express, and we are forced to adopt the words of David, And now, Lord, what should thy servant "say more unto thee?" How delightful is it to add, as he does, "For thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant;" 2 Sam. vii. 20; and thou seest those lively workings of gratitude, of love, and duty, which no language can speak!

When the communion was over, observing that some of the elements remained, I said—This is an emblem of the provisions of the gospel. Here are bread and wine enough, and to spare! Enough for all; enough for more than are here; and if any perish, it is not for want of a sufficiency of grace, but for want of hearts to use it.

In giving at the collection, I remarked—It is pleasant to think that this is not merely to defray the necessary charges, but that it is an offering to Christ's poor members. We have devoted ourselves, our all to him. I hope it is a pleasant thought; it may add a relish to the meanest offerings, as it adds a worth to them in the sight of God. Lord, I give thee this, in token that I am ready, according to my engagements, actually to give thee all, when thou shalt demand it of me.

MEDITATION VII

THE FOURTEENTH SACRAMENT, MAY 16, 1731.

Of the evils arising from a want of faith; and of our need of sanctification. Access to God by Christ.

I INTRODUCED the discourse with acknowledging that evil heart of unbelief which attends us at all

times, and which follows us even to the table of the Lord. This hinders us from profiting by providential occurrences; by ordinances; and even those of a sacramental nature. Let us endeavour to conquer our unbelief by having recourse to the promises. Observe, how free, how full, how suitable they are. I particularly directed my hearers to the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. We have brought to the table of the Lord a multitude of sins; many committed since the last time we came hither. These sins need expiation; these pollutions need cleansing. We are sensible of the pollution of them, and are therefore unwilling that others should be conscious to them; we had rather be caught in the greatest disorder, in the foulest or the meanest dress, than that all our sins, in all their circumstances, should be exposed to each other; how much more, then, should we be ashamed of them in the presence of the *holy* God! And it becomes us at this time to loathe and abhor ourselves, and to repent as in dust and in ashes. But the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and procures not only pardon, but the sanctifying Spirit; and by serious reflections upon it, as a moral means, our hearts are purified. Let none, then, dread the sacrament because they are sinners: for our very coming implies a confession that we are so, otherwise we should have no business here. The only question is, Do we desire cleansing? If we do not, we have indeed no business at it, and can receive no benefit by it. In this instance Christ does, in effect, say to every one of us, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." John xiii. 8. But I hope that we can appeal to him, that it is our desire that he would wash our feet, our hands,

head, and heart, that we may be entirely purified. And if this be indeed our desire, then are we welcome guests to the table of the Lord. Let us, then, go into his presence, and plead this blood, in the hope of being purified and accepted by it.

In breaking the bread, such reflections as these arose in my mind:—"Lord," as saith the psalmist, "who knoweth the power of thine anger?" Psalm xc. 11. It is known but to the damned in hell! They completely know it. Yet, something we know of it in other instances, especially in the humiliation and death of Christ. But is there not reason, on the contrary, to say, "Lord, who knoweth the power of thy love?" We know much of it here; but we shall only completely know it above.

In pouring out the wine, the meditations were as follow:—We have boldness to enter into the most holy place by the blood of Jesus. We are now, in comparison, but outer-court worshippers. I hope not so in every sense; but we are, undoubtedly, in some. Yet, blessed be the name of God, we have a hope of coming nearer, and have a confident assurance of entering. Some of those that were once worshipping with us are already entered. We hope to go to them by the same way. They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. So we hope to wash ours. Lord, I would receive this sacred cup as a token of my admittance to behold thee on the mercy-seat, not merely with an eye of faith, but in a more sensible and illustrious manner.

I remarked afterwards, that when God conversed with Abraham, he mentioned two kind things which he intended to do for Isaac. No

doubt Abraham rejoiced in them, but he prayed for poor Ishmael; and methinks that we should do so too.* Some of our friends are now partaking, and it is delightful to think that they, as well as we, are interested in the blessing. O that all were so interested!

MEDITATION VIII.

THE FIFTEENTH SACRAMENT, JUNE 19, 1731.

Of the causes for humility in approaching God, and of the confidence and joy which the love of Christ may inspire.

I BEGAN with observing, that when God called the people of Israel to appear before him at the feast of tabernacles, he appointed them humbly to commemorate their meanness and unworthiness; and particularly to mention the stock from whence they were descended, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father," etc. Deut. xxvi. 5. So, in our approaches to God, we should consider what we were by nature, as well as what we are made by grace. We have heard that Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Let us seriously reflect upon this.

Consider what we were. We were lost!—lost to God; lost to ourselves; lost to all well-grounded hope of a blessed eternity. And the Son of man came to seek us. Whence did he come? Whom did he come to seek? What obscure, and

* That is, pray for those who seem not at present "interested in the blessing."—Ed.

what guilty creatures! How far had we wandered! How often had we wandered! With what difficulty were we brought home! Yet his love conquered all. He came to seek us,—and that, in order to save us. What a salvation is this! Look upon a poor, guilty, ignorant, sensual creature, and think that such were we. Look, in imagination, on the damned in hell,—and think that such should we have been: and then consider how high this salvation rises. It reaches to heaven itself. Think of what you now feel:—think what we should feel, if all our corruptions were mortified, all our doubts scattered, and all our graces confirmed:—and yet much more than these will be our eternal portion. What a transporting thought! What an abundant cause for gratitude, wonder, and love!

In breaking the bread, I observed, that Christ commands us to do this in remembrance of him. But, alas, how little do we remember him! Strange that we should need a memorial; but how much stranger that we should forget him even with it! nay, that sometimes we should be ready to forget him at his table; or to remember him there, in a manner but little better than forgetfulness:—yet, he remembers us in heaven itself!—Blessed Jesus, may thy kindness to us, as it shames our unkindness and ingratitude to thee, so cure it!

In giving the cup, I said, It is the cup of blessing—the cup of blessings. O, of what a variety of blessings! Here is pardon; and strength; and grace; and the foretaste of glory! We bless it. May God bless it. So let us bless God that gives us this cup, and humbly pray that it may indeed be a cup of blessing to us. May the taste of it refresh us! and may the memory of it refresh us too!

MEDITATION IX.

THE SEVENTEENTH SACRAMENT, SEPTEMBER 5, 1731.

Thoughts on the vast extent of the Divine mercy. Death considered by the Christian but as the portal to eternal joy and triumph. Atonement and death of Christ commemorated.

I BEGAN the discourse with some meditations on these words, "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" Psalm xxxi. 19. I observed, that here is a kindness immediately prepared; and a further loving-kindness laid up for them. It is as at this table, here is goodness prepared in this feast of love, to which the words of David may be applied, "Thou hast prepared a table:" it is prepared in the presence of our enemies. The malignant host of hell behold this remedy, and see that grace offered to us which was never vouchsafed to them!—And it is intended to strengthen us against our enemies, especially against those of our own household, the corruptions of nature, and the allurements of the world. And I hope that we have found it successful against each. God has anointed our head with oil. Here, even here, he pours out his Spirit upon us. Here, he regards us as a Father, and fills us with joy and peace in believing! I hope that we can say, through grace, "Let us see Thee as we have seen Thee in the sanctuary." Here our cup runs over. This feast that is given to us is an

abundant supply. Here is enough,—more than enough for us,—there is enough for the whole world.—O delightful thought!

But besides all this, here is rich mercy laid up for them that hope in Him. Our sacramental opportunities are coming to an end. But all our enjoyments of God are not to end with them. O my friends, whenever God shall say unto us in his providence, that we shall drink no more of this fruit of the vine, may we rejoice in this, that we shall then drink it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom! And what, therefore, if he were to say so to us now? How joyfully would the tidings be received by some of us! to think that this is the last solemnity of this kind that I should attend;—but where shall I be before another? When my brethren are meeting around this table here below, I shall then be with my Father above. When they see my Saviour through these obscure and typical representations, I shall behold him face to face. My sorrows, my fears, my complaints, my trials, would all be come to an eternal period, and my soul be overflowing with eternal joy and triumph! Well, Christian, be comforted. It is near; it is even at the door! It will be but a few moments, and you will receive this bread and this wine. And it will be, at most, but a few years, and God will give you a call to the eternal world, and will put into your hand the cup of complete salvation. And to a creature conscious of eternal duration, what so great difference is there between a few years and a few moments? Methinks, that, in the view of this, our thoughts, as well as words, are swallowed up, and that nothing remains but to lift up our adoring hands and eyes to Heaven, and to say, "O how great is thy good-

ness!"—Let it be our care to secure to ourselves the evidence of our interest in it, and to live like those that fear him, and that hope in him.

The first prayer was taken up in going over these thoughts. And when breaking the bread, I repeated my address to the spectators from these words, "Is it nothing to you?" Lam. i. 12.—Is not your salvation concerned? Is it not your duty to remember Christ? And are not you undone without an interest in him? But I persuade myself that it is something to some of you. And to those of us who have turned aside to see this great sight, let me entreat you to think how nearly you are concerned in it. There, were all our hopes suspended—there, was our eternal fate concerned in the atonement and death which we here commemorate. Should not our hearts, then, be filled with reverence, be inspired with love, with gratitude, and joy, and established in the firmest exercise of faith.

When I came to pour out the wine, I particularly discoursed of it as the seal of the covenant, by which we give ourselves to God; and prayed over what I had said in the pulpit of giving up ourselves, our lives, and our possessions, to him. And, Lord, if thou seest fit that these frail bodies should not only be used, but worn out for thee,—thy will be done. We hope, when the weak machine of flesh and blood is dissolved, that its immortal inhabitant, the spirit, will spring with joy into the presence of God. And we may say, "Into thy hands we commend it, for thou hast redeemed it." I particularly received it with this profession, and added something of our dependence on Divine grace, to add efficacy to these purposes. The blood of God's covenant is awful;

but much more so when we consider that it is the blood of his Son too. It is pleasant to think that God knows all the secret language of our hearts, and that he with pleasure hears what no other creature is a witness to.

MEDITATION X.

THE TWENTIETH SACRAMENT, DECEMBER 5, 1731.

The inferiority of earthly hopes to those of heaven, with encouragements for the increase of love and faith.

I BEGAN with some reflections upon the going up of Moses to Mount Pisgah; and observed, that our prospect is vastly more entertaining than was his. The country we survey is more excellent, and our own interest in it is more important. Moses saw Canaan—an agreeable sight; the stream of Jordan, the plain of Jericho; rich pastures, painted meadows, fruitful fields, beautiful cities: but what are these to the view of the heavenly Canaan? Had he seen this,—all the beauty and grandeur of Jerusalem, as in David's time; all the sacred and solemn magnificence of the temple, as recorded by Solomon; what had it been to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the temple of God above, which, through his unmerited grace, is our prospect? He saw a city then possessed by an enemy, where was once the home of some of his pious forefathers. But we see a city possessed by our best Friend, the kingdom of our God! He saw a city where the Israel of God were to have but a transient settlement; which they might lose,

as they have now done; but we see that everlasting abode where we shall never die—whence we shall never be expelled. Once more he saw a country on which he was never to enter. God said to him, “Thou shalt not go thither unto the land;” Deut. xxxii. 52;—but he says not the like to us. How should we delight in the assurance! How should we cherish the reviving thought! And how cheerfully should we go up to the top of Pisgah to view it! How cheerfully should we die to enter upon it! There is Jordan between, and the passage may be cold and difficult; but there is the God of Israel before us;—he leads us, and his right arm upholds us.

After the prayer, I considered this ordinance as the Christian passover, and as such applied to it. Lord, I come to be more completely rescued from nature’s dark bondage. I come to be delivered from the stroke of the avenging angel through this blood sprinkled on my soul. I come, that every idol in my heart may fall down, and that I may be led onward in my way to the heavenly Canaan. Lord, we would eat our passover with unleavened bread, with bitter herbs, with loins girded, and our staves in our hands, ready to remove when thou givest us the dismissal. Speaking of seeing Jesus, I quoted Traill, and spoke of Christians once commemorating this ordinance with us, and now with Christ above. And how do they wonder that their hearts were no more inflamed by love! Is this the Saviour I loved so coldly—that I served so weakly! Now the King of glory says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” Rev. iii. 20. Come in, thou beloved of my heart! Let the door be opened; nay, let the wall be broken down, rather than that he should be excluded; rather let

me die to admit Christ, than live without him in my heart.

Addressing myself to some young people who were spectators, I observed—If you asked us the meaning of this service, we should tell you that we commemorate a dying Lord; that we were once in bondage, and that he delivered us; yes, he saved us from wrath; he is leading us to Canaan; we come hither for refreshment by the way:—is it not a noble, a reasonable, and an important service? and ought not you to pray that you may have a right to it, and then a share in it.

MEDITATION XI.

AT THE SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 1, 1732.

Salvation could only be of Divine origin.

ALTHOUGH my violent cold hindered me from speaking this day at the table with my usual freedom, yet, I bless God, it was a very comfortable ordinance; and that in the midst of the weakness, and even of the distress of nature, I had some delightful views of my everlasting rest.

Having discoursed on the abundance of mercy, in a strain which was very comfortable to myself in the preparation, and I hope, in some measure, to my hearers in the delivery, I proceeded at the table to some meditations on these words, “He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God.” 2 Cor. v. 5. That is, it was the work of a God, to bring us to it. He is God, and none but he could have done it.—To work us to it—to such a thing as a meetness for what we were naturally so

very unfit. O think what it is that we are wrought to; think who we are—what opposition God found—how few are wrought to it:—all, may awaken our admiration as well as our joy.

In breaking the bread, there were mentioned some believing views of Christ; and in receiving the cup, was enjoined a deep submission to the determinations of Divine Providence, and a readiness to receive *any* cup from the hand of God. Since we can say that, through grace, I am well persuaded that it cannot be a cup of wrath; therefore, O my God, I rejoice in saying “Thy will be done.”

I then apprehended something of the beginning of a fever, and recollected it might be fatal, yet I cannot say that I thought of it with any terror, but rather found a sweet willingness to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is far better than this present life. I adore God for it as his own work. Behold, O Lord, I am in thy hands. I would be waiting for thy salvation, and doing thy commands.



MEDITATION XII.

THE THIRTY-THIRD SACRAMENT, MARCH 4, 1733.

Regret for instances of past negligence, with reflections on the awful justice of God, and of the hopes and obligations incurred by the mercy of salvation.

It has been a sad instance of my negligence and folly, that I have taken no more notice of what has passed between God and my soul on such occasions as this for many months; as well as that

I have totally neglected my Diary for a considerable time. I began to be a little more careful towards the beginning of the year; and I plainly find that the time I have since saved for those memorandums had been before lost in that carelessness consequent upon such instances of remissness and folly.

I was this day at the table of the Lord, and I introduced the ordinance by some meditation on those words, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. I observed the title given to Christ—"his own Son." I hope we are the children of God, else we have no business here. But he was so in a peculiar and eminent sense, such as no creature is; yet God did not spare him. He was so far from being excused, that he was not favoured, that the cup might not pass away from him.

Behold His severity as well as His goodness. He "delivered him up." It was not merely a thing that happened in the common course of human events; but he was by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God given up: there was the order of God in it; there was the act of God in it; and he was sent into the world on purpose that he might become a sacrifice for sin. And God delivered him "up for us"—mean and worthless creatures as we are; "for us all," even for the meanest and the vilest of us;—gave him up to all that heavy load of punishment and wrath for you and for me. How amazing it was! Not because he needed us: Christ was in the enjoyment of eternal happiness and glory. What though ten thousand creatures were sentenced to everlasting destruction, and what if we had been in their number,

had he not been still the same? But God gave him for us; and if so, shall “he not with him also freely give us all things?” temporal blessings, so far as we need them; above all, the blessings of his covenant. If he has given Christ to purchase them for us, shall they be purchased in vain; if reconciled by his death, shall we not be saved by his life! Let us come with boldness to receive those blessings. God will give them, and let us come and give up ourselves to him: shall we not freely and faithfully give ourselves up to that God who has given us so much?

In breaking the bread, I particularly considered how, in this dispensation, sin appeared exceeding sinful. Few have just notions of it. It is the great design of the devil, to represent it as no very considerable evil, so that sinners may be easily drawn into it, and kept from repentance. But here God has contrived a method to show how malignant it is. We must have low thoughts of Christ, or we cannot have low thoughts of sin. Could it have pleased the Lord to wound him, and to put him to grief, had not such an atonement been fit, and, if fit, necessary? How odious and hateful must we appear to ourselves in this view, as polluted with that, which the soul of God hated, and which the blood of Christ expiated.

In pouring out the cup, I remarked, God prepared him a body on purpose that he might suffer in it; that he might have something to offer.

I have lost many other serious and good thoughts for want of a timely recollection of them after I came home; yet I remember to have pressed a renunciation of all sin. The Lord grant I may act according to the tenor of that discourse.

MEDITATION XIII.

THE FORTY-FIRST SACRAMENT, SEPTEMBER 2, 1733.

Records of happy experience in religion, with thoughts on the influence of the Holy Spirit.

I DESIRE thankfully to own, that I have been enabled to keep closer to God for some time towards the close of the last month than ordinary. Yesterday was a season of sweet communion with God. I found it good for my soul to draw near to him, and to converse with him by fasting and prayer. This day I have been endeavouring to promote the interests of practical godliness by my preaching and exhortation from those words, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. ii. 19.

At the table of the Lord, my meditations were fixed on those words of Isaiah, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Isa. xlv. 3. I observed the persons to whom the promise was made. It represents naturally what we are—"dry ground;" and what we are by grace—"thirsty;" longing for gracious assistance and spiritual communications. And God's Spirit is represented by "water," to signify how refreshing and how fructifying it is; and for the effects, it was to make them grow as the grass, and even as willows by the water-courses, the flourishing of which is very remarkable. I referred to the promise also to the rising generation, and recommended fervent application to God through prayer.

In breaking the bread, I particularly insisted on the obligations that we are under to depart from all iniquity. And O how contemptible and vile does the dearest lust and corruption seem when compared with the favour of the Lord Jesus Christ!

In pouring out the wine, I spoke particularly of resolution for Christ, and that we should look around in our various circumstances to find opportunities of serving him. And just before I received, I had such views of approaching glory as I have seldom known; so that I even longed to lay down my head in the bosom of Christ, and to die there. I record it, admiring the riches of Divine grace therein to so vile a creature. God has lately owned my ministry to the conversion of several souls; and now he meets me in ordinances, and gives me more than ordinary communion with him. The Lord grant that I may not be high-minded, but fear; and that I may quietly wait for the salvation of God. I am sure that if I ever performed any action of my life with a full consent of soul, it was that by which I this day gave up my soul unto the Lord; and it is that with which I now record my humble resolution, in his strength, of being invariably and eternally his. Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.

THE FORTY-FOURTH SACRAMENT, DECEMBER 2, 1733.

The joy and confidence of a Christian in the cross of Christ when viewed as the emblem of salvation.

I OPENED the ordinance with some meditations on those words, "God forbid that I should glory, save

in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Galatians vi. 14.—I observed the apostle's temper with respect to the cross of Christ, and the reason of this regard to it. His temper was that he gloried in it. To be sure, he had been often upbraided with it; "This babbler,—thou art beside thyself," etc.: yet he was not ashamed to own himself the disciple of a crucified Redeemer; very far from that. I hope we, too, are not ashamed of that cause. If every friend present were the most keen and inveterate enemy to the gospel, I hope that I should not be ashamed to administer the ordinance, or to receive it. Rather may we glory in that, and in nothing else:—not in ourselves; in our wisdom, learning, reasoning powers, or morality;—in nothing, inconsistent with our coming as naked, trembling, guilty creatures, to shelter ourselves under the cross; which though to those that perish foolishness, (as I had been showing this day from the pulpit,) is to the believing soul, Christ the power and the wisdom of God! The effect follows. O that it may be found in us! "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:" that is, when I consider a suffering Redeemer, methinks that the world is as nothing; I am dead to it, and it to me. It can no more relieve, help, delight, or save me, than it could a dying man. I have no more desire after it, than one expiring upon the cross; but I live to Him that died for me.

After deep humiliation, I proceeded to break the bread, and in breaking it I spoke of the love of Christ. How affecting, if a friend had interposed between us and one that came to assault and to destroy us; and if he had only received a wound, how would it have impressed our hearts! Much more was it to die for us: to die when it was in his

own power to have prevented it, which he took care to show, by striking those to the ground who came to apprehend him. Behold, too, the hardness and obstinacy of their hearts, that they would still persist in that attempt. Yet when our Lord had given this testimony of his power, he submitted himself, as if he had been weak and vanquished. Admire his goodness.

In pouring out the cup, I mentioned the prophecy, "He shall see his seed." Isaiah liii. 10. How comfortable the thought! It is fulfilled in us, and it shall be accomplished in those that come after us. Christ shall have a seed to serve him when we are in our graves; and we and they, at the consummation of all things, shall be taken up with the enjoyment of him, and drink new wine in our Father's kingdom.

I bless God that I had a very delightful day: my tears flowed, as I hope, of love, for this fountain of my heart was unutterably revived with a sense of my covenant interest in God.



MEDITATION XV.

THE FIFTY-FIFTH SACRAMENT, JANUARY 5, 1735.

The triumph of Christ, and the future triumph of the church in him.

As I was this day employed in meditations on Christ's compassion to tempted souls; I introduced the sacrament with some contemplations on those words, "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly." Colossians ii. 15. Our danger from the powers of hell was great;

they foiled our first parents even in paradise; and if such things were done in the green tree, what would have been done in the dry? No doubt the devil triumphed in that victory. He looked on mankind as his prey; but Christ took the spoil out of the hands of the mighty. Little did the devil think how his devices would end. Little did he think how God would overrule them to his own glory, and to the advanced happiness of his people; how, out of the eater there should come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness. Judges xiv. 14. As little did he think, when he was tempting and triumphing over Christ on the cross, that he was wounding his own cause, and destroying his own kingdom; but there, Christ despoiled him; there he covered him with confusion and shame. For there he recovered his people out of his hands; he bound the strong man armed, and spoiled his goods. Then he led captivity captive! ascended in triumph; and having broken the head of the dragon, gave him, as it were, to be meat to his people inhabiting the wilderness. Now the victory is begun; ere long it shall be completed, and the God of peace—He who through Christ became so—shall shortly bruise Satan under our feet. Yet a little while, and we shall trample upon him; not only as a wounded, but as a destroyed enemy; for by death, Christ has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. O let us celebrate the victory.

In breaking the bread, I had some reflections on the manner of Christ's making himself known to his people;—in the riches of his dying love; in the power of his resurrection; the prevalence of his intercession; the stability of his covenant, and the glory of his kingdom. O, how happy, to behold

Jesus, to see him face to face! We rejoice to receive a letter from a friend; but how much more do we rejoice to meet that friend, to converse with him! What, then, will our meeting above be, should this be our last sacrament?

Before pouring out the wine, I said—By the cross of Christ, the world is crucified to us, and we to the world. It makes us indifferent to it, by filling our minds with other thoughts. When John stood before the cross of Christ, as his soul was possessed with the idea of his crucified Master, how little was he impressed with earthly things! Surely, it would have been much the same, whether he had to return to a palace or a cottage. This ordinance also encourages our dependence upon God for what is necessary. If he spreads such a table for us, will he not spread our own? If my Prince allows and invites me to come monthly, and to sit down with him at his own table, will he see me starve on other days? Will he not, in one way or another, find bread for me and for my family? How unworthy a suspicion!

After the prayer, and just before I received the cup, I fell into a pleasing reflection on these words, “They did all drink the same spiritual drink;”—the apostles; the martyrs; our remote ancestors; our fathers; our former companions in the ways of God. They all came to this ordinance, and were refreshed by it. Future Christians shall arise, and partake of it, too, when our places are empty. We are related to all. Methinks, that we should look back, look around, and look forward with delight, and make, as it were, the joy of the whole church our own. But O, that better assembly where we shall all unite; where we shall all meet triumphantly around the

board of our heavenly Father, and share in much nobler entertainments!

In the prayer, I had a pleasing view of God, as one, without whom we should not know what to do, but be even a burden to ourselves.



MEDITATION XVI.

THE FIFTY-SIXTH SACRAMENT, FEBRUARY 2, 1735.

The soul delighting in the ascension of Christ, under the view that death is thus "swallowed up in victory," and meditating on Christ as suffering the just for the unjust.

THIS Sabbath was very remarkable on account of the extraordinary pleasure that I had, both in attending on the sermon in the morning, and on the Lord's supper in the evening; nor can I forbear observing the connexion between them. Mr. Wilkinson had preached in the morning, perhaps the best sermon I have ever heard, undoubtedly one of the best, on the duties and privileges of the children of God; a subject from which I had preached a sermon that I thought laboured: but when I saw the vast disproportion between the two discourses, and the great advantage on his side; and, indeed, considered how much superior it was to almost any thing I ever produced, it shamed and humbled me; and yet I bless God that it did not grieve me. If any stirrings of envy moved, they were immediately suppressed; and as soon as I came home, I solemnly returned my acknowledgments to God for having raised up such a light in his church, and for having honoured me

with his education; and recommended him to the Divine blessing with meltings of the tenderest affection, leaving myself in the hand of God, acquiescing in the thought of being eclipsed, of being neglected, if God should so appoint: at the same time adoring him, that, with capacities inferior to a multitude of others, I had been led into services superior to many of those in comparison with whom my knowledge is but as that of a child.

In the prayer I had much communion with God; in the sermon, little or none; but so much in the sacrament, that my very heart was almost swallowed up. A variety of plain, solid, and natural thoughts sprung in upon my mind, like water from a fountain, and gave me unutterable pleasure. Many of them are vanished away; some few remain, the substance of which were as follow.

I introduced the ordinance with some meditations on these words, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men." Psalm lxviii. 18. We are met to commemorate the death of Christ, but not only his death. There was a sacred pleasure, after his resurrection, in beholding the place where the Lord lay. But had he never risen, what a grief would it have been, on the fourth day, to have seen Christ still lying there! In succeeding days and ages, what a reproach to Christians—if such existed in succeeding ages—to have said to them, "Behold the sepulchre of your Lord!" But now the reproach of the cross and of the tomb has ceased. He has risen; and that is in itself a pleasant thought. He has ascended on high; and that is one still more delightful. Had he risen and dwelt on earth, we might have rejoiced and gloried in him, though we had seen him in the same hum-

ble form in which he appeared to Mary Magdalene, or to the disciples on the way to Emmaus. But he has gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God. Let us look after him there. When Elijah was taken away, Elisha smote his hands and exclaimed, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" 2 Kings ii. 12. But is there reason thus to lament an ascended Saviour? We should rather rejoice. The disciples stood gazing up into heaven; but wherefore? One would rather have thought that they should have recollected it as a matter of joy, on principles of gratitude and interest. Of gratitude! how pleasant to think of the triumph of our friends! If a kind and generous friend had exposed his life for us, and, instead of perishing in the attempt, had found his own advancement in it, surely it would have given us peculiar joy; perhaps even greater than our own preferment could have done. Is it not, then, a matter of congratulation that Christ has ascended on high, and sat down at the right hand of God; especially when we consider how our interest is concerned, both as he has led captivity captive, and given gifts to men? He has led captivity captive, that is, he has triumphed over those who would have triumphed over us. Over our enemy, when he thought to have the greatest advantage. Even on the cross he triumphed over death, so that he has abolished it, and quickly will it be swallowed up in victory. We view death here as a conqueror;—he has made late depredations, for within the last ten days two of our members have died, (that is, Mrs. Manning and Mrs. Cook;) but yet we triumph over him by faith in Christ. Arise, arise, and lead captivity captive, O Son of God. We should raise our

hosannas to thee from earth. Especially considering the gifts received for men; the extraordinary endowments of the apostles and the evangelists, the benefits of which we now receive, and other spiritual gifts which are given us in conversion, in quickening, and in carrying us on thus far. Why have we not fallen as by former difficulties? We had never got thus far without support. Had we seen them, we should not, perhaps, have had the courage to encounter them. And He will impart more comforts, so that we may now consider ourselves as risen and ascended with him. In the mean time, let us go to the throne of grace.

In breaking the bread, I remarked, How highly should we have thought ourselves indebted to Christ, if in the days of his flesh he had invited us to sup with him!—Lord, if thou hadst given me a crumb of bread, or a cup of cold water, as a token of thy love, it had been better to me than wine; better than a feast of fat things: but thou givest me this bread; thou comest to sup with me, and invitest me to sup with thee!

In pouring out the wine, I added, Christ “suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” It is not said, to heaven, but to God, to intimate, that those who share in salvation by Christ are reconciled to God, and reinstated in his favour; his love is shed abroad in your souls, and they shall be brought to the eternal enjoyment of him. In the mean time, in this dependence let us go to God. To him that has loved us! Pleasing gradation; loved me—gave himself for me. But when I look around me at his table, what then? Could I, then, see all Sion, an assembly of all men in every nation, of every kindred and language; above all, could I look within the veil, how

delightful! O what a joyful universal hosanna will arise when all are thus assembled together!

Such as these were the workings of my heart at this most delightful and edifying ordinance. O that it may not prove only as a transient blaze of the spirits! but that the happy consequences of it may go along with me into all the devotions, and into all the services, that lie before me this month; and that I may be prepared for all the will of God.



MEDITATION XVII.

THE FIFTY-SEVENTH SACRAMENT, MARCH 2, 1735.

Happy recollections of communion with God in the offices of religion, with thoughts on the joyful duties of gratitude and love.

THIS, like yesterday, has been a day of unmerited, of unbounded goodness, and I can hardly express the sweet communion with God, which I had in his house and at his table. I had been discoursing on communion with him, and, through grace, I have felt it. A sermon composed under great deadness, and which, when I composed it, I had thought very meanly of, was delivered with great seriousness, spirit, and pleasure. It was the language not merely of my tongue, but of my heart. I had communion with God, as my compassionate, wise, almighty, and bountiful Friend; with Christ, as my atonement, righteousness, Intercessor, Head, and Forerunner; and adored the Divine grace for such manifestations to so guilty and wretched a creature.

I opened the ordinance of the Lord's supper

with some meditations upon the women weeping as they followed Christ. They did not know all the purposes of his death. They mourned a kind and generous Friend;—we mourn a Redeemer; for the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all;—he laid on him mine iniquity; perhaps mine alone might have sunk him as deep; at least, mine were added to the weight. He died for me. If I by my folly, had occasioned the death of a dear and valuable friend, how would it have wounded my soul! and if I had seen his picture, how would it have revived my sorrows! and if, when dying, he had sent me some kind token of his forgiveness and his love, how would my heart have bled when I had seen that token! Behold, it is here! this is the token that our dying Saviour sends to us, to tell us that he heartily forgives our folly and our wickedness, and died that it might be forgiven. What return shall I make?—Lord, I will love thee. But it is a poor return; but if I had more to give thee, I would do it cheerfully. If I were the highest angel in heaven, thou shouldst have all my heart. In the mean time, blessed be thy name, that I can say I love thee; and that thou knowest that, as thou knowest all things;—as Peter, when he could not appeal to his actions, as he could have wished, appealed to his heart and to Him that knew it: “Lord, I wish I could say, that thou mayest see by my conduct, that I have loved thee:—that I have adhered to thee when all forsook thee; and though brought into the danger of dying with thee, yet that I have not denied thee.” But as he could not say this, he appeals to Christ: “Lord, though I cannot clear it up as I could wish to men, yet I hope that I can clear it up to thee.”

In breaking the bread, I said, Is it nothing to us? Why, it is something to all around us; how much more, then, to us! Lord, I grieve that I can grieve no more. I appeal to thee, that I would love thee; and if my love might grow as affliction grows, I would bear as much as ever I could.

This I wrote as soon as I came home; but having been interrupted in the memorandums here, I forget what followed in pouring out the wine, and only remember that it was, on the whole, a blessed day.

MEDITATION XVIII.

THE FIFTY-NINTH SACRAMENT, MAY 4, 1735.

*Of the connexion of the spiritual blessings with each other,
with correspondent exhortations.*

I OPENED the ordinance with some meditations on these words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph. i. 3, 4. Let us bless God at all times, especially after such meditations as we have here been engaged in, that we, who were afar off, are brought nigh. This is fulfilled in this very approach to the Lord's supper, where the blood of Christ, which brought us nigh, is in so peculiar a manner to be commemorated. We have reason to bless God, who herein has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. There is a chain, and a connexion; those who are blessed with

one spiritual blessing are blessed with all,—and they are the blessings with which the Christian is most affected, because in themselves so noble; and because there is such a connexion between them and heavenly things; for whom he predestinated, he called, justified, and glorified. It is because he has chosen us in him, that all those favours are bestowed upon us. God does nothing without design;—“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world;” Acts xv. 18; and it is a pleasing thought, that we lay upon the heart of Christ before the world was. God gave us to him by the covenant of redemption, when he chose us. It was of his free grace that he chose us all in him; and whatever favour he proposed doing he did on his account; and this was that we might be not only morally virtuous, but holy, and religious, upon scriptural principles; and also that we might be without blame; cutting off occasion from those who might seek to speak evil of us, and of religion; and all this in love, which must be the principle of our obedience;—love to God, and love to each other. Love—the blessed abridgement of all piety, and which this ordinance has a most apparent tendency to promote.

In the prayer, we humbled ourselves deeply before God, reflecting, particularly, that we could not have believed on the last sacrament day, that we should thus have forsaken him before the return of this.

When we came to break the bread we observed, that God and the devil are represented as carrying on the work of bruising Christ, though with different aims and purposes—the one full of grace, the other of malignity. Here God took the cunning in his own craftiness, and “out of the eater

came forth meat." Instead of our being deterred from trusting in Christ by what he has suffered, we are engaged to trust in him the more. Blessed Lord, we commit ourselves to thee, who wast thus reviled to bring us to glory; and seek our lives from thee, who didst die.

Before filling the cup, I mentioned our having access to the most holy place by the blood of Christ; in token of which the veil of the temple, though thick with embroidery, was rent asunder. Let us, by faith, look inward to that which is within it, and draw nigh in a full assurance of faith. Surely, if we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, we may have some peculiar ardour when drawing near to God in this blessed and holy ordinance; and in this part of it, accordingly, the prayer was principally taken up in pleading promises of pardon, of sanctification, conduct, direction, support, and the imparting of every good thing, of perseverance, and glory; and afterwards I said, Why should we doubt of them? Because we are sinners? Those promises are, many of them, such that they could be made only to sinful creatures.

I know not when I have remembered our concerns as a church with more pleasure than at this ordinance. On the whole, it was a season of some comfort especially in the advance of it, though my mind was greatly distracted at the beginning. Many acknowledged the presence of God with them in the duties of the day: may all the praise be ascribed to him.

MEDITATION XIX.

THE FIFTY-FOURTH SACRAMENT, SEPTEMBER 7, 1735.

Of the Divine mercy in the scheme of redemption, with solemn thoughts on our personal responsibility for the sufferings of Christ.

THE ordinance was introduced with some reflections on those words, "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." 2 Cor. i. 20. I had been discoursing on the struggle between faith and unbelief, in a precious soul; and I thought this a proper sequel. The promises of God may be said to be yea and amen in Christ, as it is through him that they are all made. Whatever security they give us is to be ascribed to him, because we had otherwise been treated as heirs of wrath; and he takes it upon himself to see to the performance of them, being exalted by God for that very purpose. And although nothing can be a greater security than the Divine fidelity, yet it sometimes suits our infirmities, and it helps our faith, to see such a step taken towards the performance of the Divine promises;—that such a gracious instrument should have been raised up, and endued with such extraordinary power. Therefore our faith may justly take its rise from hence, and we may encourage ourselves to hope for those blessings concerning which we might else have been most ready to doubt. Although my sins be ever so great, when I look on the blood of Christ, I can believe that they may be pardoned. Whatever difficulties arise, his power and his

grace can support me; and his wisdom can turn to good whatever calamities I now endure. Where was any thing over which one would have been more tempted to suspect that providence had slept, than in this great scene of the death and sufferings of Christ? And yet they were accomplished by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, and overruled to the most gracious purposes. And, surely, when we consider the promise of eternal glory, as sealed in the blood of Christ,—it is so noble a price, that we may expect that the purchase will indeed be glorious; and unworthy as we are ourselves, we may hope for heaven, in the worthiness of Jesus Christ.

In breaking the bread, I remarked, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.” Isa. liii. 5. Should not the thought grieve us? When Christ came into our world, and behaved in such a manner in it, we might have expected that he would have been received with the utmost affection; that when the eye saw him, the voice should have blessed him; and that, if there had been one mouth that could have reviled him, one hand that could have struck or wounded him, it had been grievous; much more so, that he should have been slain, although it had been but by one person: how much more so, when such vast multitudes were so concerned, that every one of them made it his own act, to have killed the Prince of life! Vast multitudes were, indeed, the occasion of that crime, and we are of the number yet! And yet he spoke in mercy to those who were his betrayers and his murderers; the word of this salvation by him was even sent to them! Think of our own concern in his death: had the earth been only the scene of his sufferings, and

had he died here for another order of beings, it would have well become us to have thought often on so wonderful a transaction; how much the more so, when it was that he might redeem us by his own blood!

When pouring out the wine, I observed, that had a malefactor been executed as Christ was for the murder of the dearest and best of our friends, or for the most horrible treason against our country, yet we could hardly have borne to have seen some circumstances of the rage and cruelty with which he was treated; it would have turned even justice into gall: but if we had seen an innocent person, if we had seen a friend, thus handled, what indignation, what distress would have arisen in our minds! Surely, if a person of a very dissolute and abandoned character had, in a fit of intoxication, been drawn in to have been a party in such a crime, he must have been exceedingly shocked in the review. Here, then, let our tears flow; here let our indignation arise, and that, against ourselves!

I concluded this ordinance with an exhortation to the greatest care, that we may live as under the influence of the dying love of Christ: and that it is our duty to recollect the particular frailties and temptations of our more serious relations in life, so that we may be armed with correspondent resolutions and engagements. Here, the exhortation was warm; and speaking of the concern with which ministers should declare these things, I mentioned the zeal of the apostles when they came to preach a crucified, yet a risen, Redeemer; and prayed earnestly that the like impressions might, by the same Spirit, be made upon our hearts.

MEDITATION XX.

THE SIXTY-FIFTH SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 5, 1735.

How the favour of God, and the hopes of the gospel, may render a Christian superior to the trials and sorrows of the world.

I OPENED the ordinance with some meditations on these words, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." Psalm xxiii. 5. Here is a table spread, a table of provisions, which may, indeed, to an eye of sense, seem but of little value; yet, to the believing eye of faith, in connexion with the purposes for which they are appointed, the value of them is inestimably great, as that of parchment and of wax may become in being made the conveyance of some vast estate. God has prepared this table: to spread it was not a sudden thing, the work of an hour, or of a day: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world;" Acts xv. 18; and all seem to have been centred in this; therefore, was the way prepared by so many prophecies; by so many types; but, through the singular goodness of God, the dearest discoveries have been reserved for us. Never did God say concerning the pass-over, This is the representation of my Son, who is to be made a sacrifice for sin; this seals to you the covenant of grace, to be established in the blood of that immaculate Lamb, the most excellent dispenser of this most valuable covenant;—this was happily reserved for us. And this table is prepared for us "in the presence of our ene-

mies.” Scripture represents a band of formidable spirits as engaged for our ruin: they urged on the death of Christ, but found their own disappointment and defeat in it; and, no doubt, they look with envy and rage on the work of our redemption, and all the memorials of it. God anoints our head as with oil in this ordinance; we receive the effusion of that blessed Spirit from Christ our Head, of which it may be said, that it is like the oil poured out on the head of Aaron, which ran down to his beard, and thence to the skirts of his garment. And we may truly say, that our cup runs over. God bestows upon us, not only a sufficiency, but a superfluity of blessings. We might have had eternal reason to have adored his goodness had he done much less than this. Had he continued us in this present life, free from its decays and its calamities, and favoured us with an eternal duration of those pleasures of friendship and devotion which we here enjoy, it would have been matter of grateful acknowledgment; much more so, had he given us the entertainments of holy and separate spirits, although the body had been lost in the grave; but he graciously adds the happiness of that to the happiness of the soul, and thus makes our whole person completely blessed. How reasonably may we then conclude, that surely “goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives;” for what can we imagine so valuable, that God would compare it with, or prefer it to, his Son? Should our days be gloomy, afflicted, unprofitable, and useless, still shall mercy and goodness follow them; and, what is best of all, we shall “dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” It would be a great favour to be allowed every day to spend an hour in God’s house with

such delight as we have sometimes, and I hope this day, done; much better than to enjoy a great estate, or than any of the delights of sense. But God will bring his children home, and there they shall dwell for ever! Reviving thought! We may arise from the table of the Lord with satisfaction; nay, in this view, we might take our last leave of it with pleasure; yes, with far greater and more reasonable pleasure than the Jews took their leave of the Mosaic tabernacle, that they might go and worship God in his temple at Jerusalem.

In breaking the bread, I said, Blessed Jesus, had we only seen thee in a mortal form, at a table with the children of men, although it had been under a golden canopy, and every luxury of Ahasuerus' feast had been renewed; though the children of princes had been waiting upon thee, and all the kings and emperors on the earth had been sitting with thee; though the greatest delicacies of animal nature had been exhausted for thine entertainment, what a condescension had it been! especially, if thou hadst here instructed them in a way of virtue and of happiness; but how much more at a paschal table, when telling thy disciples of thy body broken, and thy blood shed! How important must the case be! An angel would not have descended from heaven, nor dwelt one day in a mortal form on the earth, upon any mean and low occasion; how much less, then, the Lord of angels!

In pouring out the wine, I said, We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. To think of the blood of Jesus poured out is wonderful; to think of it in this connexion, and that without it we might have had no boldness. Had we arrived at the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem,

we might have stopped short, as some poor naked beggar at the door of the presence chamber of a king; but now, we are encouraged to make our approach as those who may hope to worship there.

In taking the cup, I remarked, We commemorate thy death, blessed Jesus; nor would we be ashamed nor afraid to do so, if we were surrounded with thy blaspheming and persecuting enemies, and although we might be led out to share thy cross, for we are ready to take it with thy crown.

I addressed the spectators with an expostulation on the folly of continuing irresolute, and of absenting themselves, without due cause, from the table of the Lord.

I bless God, that I had some comfortable communion with him this day, and could say, that it was good for me to be there.



MEDITATION XXI.

THE SIXTY-EIGHTH SACRAMENT, NOVEMBER 2, 1735.

Love to the Redeemer will insure the obedience of a Christian to the precepts of his law, and to such are promised the constant support of the Divine presence.

“If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John xiv. 23. Christians you will observe that we are not surveying the duties and privileges of the most eminent and distinguished saints, but those of every Christian. It is his character, who will keep the words of Christ; who will receive them; who will retain them; who will reflect upon them, and

who will act in a humble subjection to them;—and this very thought, that they are the words of Christ, will be enough for him; a Divine power will attend them, and a humble obedience will be immediately produced.

I hope we know what this character means: if we do, we are happy. “If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him.” Amazing condescension, that the great eternal Father should love a poor sinful worm! But this he will do; and love him in such a manner as to become his invariable friend; and O, what a happiness? Although some may slight me; although others may censure me; although others hate me; even though all the rage of earth and hell unite against me, yet if God loves me, it is enough! How much more, if he dwells with me; and Christ likewise! Yet this is the promise, “We will come unto him.” I hope it is fulfilled; I hope that Christ has come to us this day in meditation, retirement, and prayer; and is coming to his table. And “we will come unto him, and make our abode with him!” O this crowns all! To have God, not as a transient visitor, but to have him as our constant Friend; what a blessed boon does it bestow! And has not God for some time made his abode in our hearts? Surely, if he had not, we had drooped and perished long ago. We may hope that he will dwell there for ever; and O, what a delight it should be to us! We are ready to say, “Lord, they were happy to whom thou didst come in the days of thy flesh; with whom thou didst make thine abode. How should we have rejoiced in that happiness, and loved the very house wherein thou didst dwell, the very room where we had had converse with thee!”

But, upon the whole, Christ might answer to us, as he did to the woman that fondly cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked;" "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Luke xi. 27, 28.

In breaking the bread I observed, among many other things, the emphasis of those words, "With his stripes we are healed." Isa. liii. 5. The recovery is already begun in every gracious soul; and it is the pledge of an entire cure. Yet a little while, and all the remaining diseases of the soul shall be entirely done away with; and all imperfection and sorrow shall give way to the complete manifestation of the sons of God, in a world of everlasting joy and glory.

Other meditations were added, but having been interrupted when writing this, and not having made any other memorandum of them, they have now slipped from my memory.

MEDITATION XXII.

THE SIXTY-NINTH SACRAMENT, DECEMBER 6, 1735.

Christians thankful and happy under the promise that they shall share in the heavenly felicity of Christ.

THIS was the last sacrament day in which my dear friend and brother, Mr. Isaac Wilkinson, of whom the world is not worthy, continued with me, under the relation of an assistant. He preached in the morning, from these words, "We rejoice in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 3. And I preached in the afternoon, of "God being glorified by Christ."

I introduced the ordinance of the Lord's supper with some reflections on those words in John, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." John xvii. 24. I observed the language by which Christians are described, as those whom the Father hath given him; thereby, probably, referring to the covenant of election. How happy a thought is it, if we are interested therein! Christ prays, that they may be with him where he is. To be with Christ in any circumstances must appear delightful; how much more so in heaven! The apostle's faith was so strong, that he considered himself as already there, and overlooked all the distance, all the darkness, and all the suffering that interposed. Amiable example for our faith to follow, wherein the apostle assists us, when he speaks of us as raised up together with him, and set in heavenly places, that we may behold the glory of Christ. It was not merely out of ostentation, but as he knew the happiness that it would carry along with it, to see the Holy One in our own nature; our great Benefactor, and our Almighty Guardian; on account of which we should look upon it as the pledge and security of our own glory. With regard to this he speaks in the most positive terms, and yet very consistently with the most perfect submission: "Father, *I will*, that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am:" I do not only pray for it, but I claim it; I humbly enter my demand on this head. Blessed souls, to whom this promise is sealed! Gracious Saviour, that offered such a petition!

In breaking the bread, I observed,—Christ instituted this ordinance that we might remember him. I hope that we know the pleasure of re-

membering him, and how our remembrance of him has been assisted at it; how our faith has been thus helped, and all our other graces proportionably strengthened.

I particularly insisted, in drinking from the cup, on our putting ourselves and all our concerns into the hands of Christ. Our covenant engagement is to serve Christ; our covenant hope is to enjoy him; but whether it be in this world, or in another, is a matter not worth contesting between such lovers and such friends.

MEDITATION XXIII.

THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 3, 1736.

DEAR BETSEY DEAD.*

The Christian secure under the covenant of the gospel and the guardianship of the Redeemer. Written under the immediate pressure of the most severe domestic affliction that Dr. Doddridge was ever called upon to suffer, and containing many interesting and pathetic particulars.

I HAD preached in the bitterness of my heart from these words: "Is it well with thy husband? is it

* The following extract from the Diary of Dr. Doddridge is here subjoined, as affording an explanation of some particulars alluded to in the text.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH OF MY DEAR CHILD, AND THE MANY MOURNFUL PROVIDENCES ATTENDING IT.

I HAVE a great deal of reason to condemn my own negligence and folly, that for so many months I have entered no memorandums of what has passed between God and my soul, although some of the transactions were very remarkable, as well as some things which I have heard con-

well with the child? And she answered, It is well." 2 Kings iv. 26. I endeavoured to show the reason there was to say this; but surely there was never any dispensation of Providence in

cerning others; but the subject of this article is the most melancholy of any. We lost my dear and reverend brother and friend, Mr. Sanders, on the 31st of July last; on the 1st of September, Lady Russell—that invaluable friend, died at Reading, on her road from Bath; and on Friday, the 1st of October, God was pleased, by a most awful stroke, to take away my eldest, dearest child, my lovely Betsey. She was formed to strike my affections in the most powerful manner; such a person, genius, and temper, as I admired even beyond their real importance, so that indeed I doted upon her, and was for many months before her death in a great degree of bondage upon her account. She was taken ill at Newport about the middle of June, and from thence to the day of her death, she was my continual thought, and almost uninterrupted care. God only knows with what earnestness and importunity I prostrated myself before him to beg her life, which I would have been willing almost to have purchased with my own. When reduced to the lowest degree of languishment by a consumption, I could not forbear looking in upon her almost every hour. I saw her with the strongest mixture of anguish and delight; no chemist ever watched his crucible with greater care, when he expected the production of the philosopher's stone, than I watched her in all the various turns of her distemper, which at last grew utterly hopeless, and then no language can express the agony into which it threw me. One remarkable circumstance I cannot but recollect: in praying most affectionately, perhaps too earnestly, for her life, these words came into my mind with great power, "Speak no more to me of this matter." I was unwilling to take them, and went into the chamber to see my dear lamb, when, instead of receiving me with her usual tenderness, she looked upon me with a stern air, and said, with a very remarkable determination of voice, "I have no more to say to you;" and I think that from that time, although she lived at least ten days, she seldom looked upon me with pleasure, or cared to suffer me to come near her. But that I might feel all the bitterness of the

which I found it so hard, for my very soul had been overwhelmed within me. Indeed, some hard thoughts of God were ready to arise; and the apprehension of his heavy displeasure, and the fear

affliction, Providence so ordered it, that I came in when her sharpest agonies were upon her, and those words, "O dear, O dear, what shall I do?" rung in my ears for succeeding hours and days. But God delivered her,—and she, without any violent pang in the article of her dissolution, quietly and sweetly fell asleep, as I hope, in Jesus, about ten at night, I being then at Maidwell. When I came home, my mind was under a dark cloud relating to her eternal state; but God was pleased graciously to remove it, and gave me comfortable hopes, after having felt the most heart-rending sorrow. My dear wife bore the affliction in the most glorious manner, and discovered more wisdom, and piety, and steadiness of temper in a few days, than I had ever in six years an opportunity of observing before. O my soul, God has blasted thy gourd; thy greatest earthly delight is gone: seek it in heaven, where I hope this dear babe is; where I am sure that my Saviour is; and where I trust, through grace, notwithstanding all this irregularity of temper and of heart, that I shall shortly be.

Sunday, October 3, 1736.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS AFTER THE FUNERAL OF MY DEAR
BETSEY.

I HAVE NOW been laying the delight of my eyes in the dust, and it is for ever hidden from them. My heart was too full to weep much. We had a suitable sermon from these words: "Doest thou well to be angry;" Jonah iv. 4; because of the gourd? I hope God knows that I am not angry; but sorrowful he surely allows me to be. I could have wished that more had been said concerning the hope we may have of our child; and it was a great disappointment to me that nothing of that kind should have been said by one that loved her so well as my brother Hunt did. Yet, I bless God, I have my hopes that she is lodged in the arms of Christ. And there was an occurrence that I took much notice of; I was most earnestly praying that God would be pleased to give me some further encourage-

of my child's future state, added fuel to the fire. Upon the whole, my mind was in the most painful agitation; but it pleased God, that, in composing the sermon, my soul became quieted, and I was

ment on this head, by letting some new light, or by directing me to some further thoughts upon the subject. Soon after, as I came into my wife's chamber, she told me that our maid Betty, who had, indeed the affection of a parent for my dear girl, had just before assured her, that, on the Sabbath day evening, Betsey would be repeating to herself some things of what she had heard in my prayers and in my preaching, but did not care to talk of it to others; and my wife assured me that she solemnly recommended herself to God in the words that I had taught her a little before she died. Blessed God, hast thou not received her? I trust that thou hast, and pardoned the infirmities of her poor, short, childish, afflicted life. I hope, in some measure out of love to me, as thy servant, thou hast done it for Christ's sake; and I would consider the very hope, as an engagement to thy future service. Lord, I love those who were kind to my child, and those that wept with me for her; shall I not much more love thee, who, I hope, art at this moment taking care of her, and opening her infant faculties for the duties and blessedness of heaven.

Lord, I would consider myself as a dying creature. My first-born is gone;—my beloved child is laid in bed before me. I have often followed her to her bed in a literal sense; and shortly I shall follow her to that, where we shall lie down together, and our rest shall be together in the dust. In a literal sense, the grave is ready for me. My grave is made—I have looked into it—a dear part of myself is already there; and when I stood at the Lord's table I stood directly over it. It is some pleasure to me to think that my dust will be lodged near that of my dear lamb, how much more to hope that my soul will rest with hers, and rejoice in her for ever! But, O, let me not centre my thoughts even here; it is a rest with, and in God, that is my ultimate hope. Lord, may thy grace secure it to me! and in the mean time give me some holy acquiescence of soul in thee; and although my gourd be withered, yet shelter me under the shadow of thy wings.

October 4, 1736.

brought into a more silent and cordial submission to the Divine will.

At the table I discoursed on these words, "Although my house be not so with God." 2 Samuel xxiii. 5. I observed, that domestic calamities may befall good men in their journey through life, and particularly in relation to their children; but that they have a refuge in God's covenant; it is everlasting; it is sure: it is well ordered—every provision is made according to our necessities; and it shall be our salvation, as it is the object of our most affectionate regard.

One further circumstance I must record; and that is, that I here solemnly recollected that I had, in a former sacrament taken the cup with these words, "Lord, I take this cup as a public and solemn token that I will refuse no other cup which thou shalt put into my hand." I mentioned this recollection, and charged it publicly on myself and my Christian friends. God has taken me at my word, but I do not retract it; I repeat it again with regard to every future cup.

I am just come from the coffin of my dear child, who seems to be sweetly asleep there, with a serene, composed, delightful countenance, once how animated with double life! There—lo! O my soul! lo there! is thine idol laid still in death—the creature which stood next to God in thine heart; to whom it was opened with a fond and flattering delight. Methinks I would learn to be dead with her—dead to the world. O that I could be dead with her! not any further than that her dear memory may promote my living to God.*

* The following note was written in the margin of the manuscript by the late Rev. Thomas Stedman: "I think I have heard that the doctor wrote his funeral sermon for his daughter, or a part of it, upon her coffin."

I had a great deal of very edifying conversation last night and this morning with my wife, whose wisdom does indeed make her face to shine under this affliction. She is supported and animated with a courage which seems not at all natural to her: talks with the utmost freedom, and has really said many of the most useful things that ever were said to me by any person upon the earth, both as to consolation and admonition. Had the best things I have read on the subject been collected together, they could hardly have been better conceived or better expressed. This is to me very surprising, when I consider her usual reserve. I have all imaginable reason to believe that God will make this affliction a great blessing to her, and I hope it may prove so to me. There was a fond delight and complacence which I took in Betsey beyond any thing living. Although she had not a tenth part of that rational, manly love, which I pay to her mamma, and many surviving friends; yet it leaves a peculiar pain upon my heart, and it is almost as if my very gall were poured out upon the earth. Yet much sweetness mingles itself with this bitter potion, chiefly in the view and hope of my speedy removal to the eternal world. May it not be the beauty of this providence, that instead of her living many years upon the earth, God may have taken away my child that I might be fitted for and reconciled to my own dissolution, perhaps nearly approaching? I verily believe that I shall meet her there, and enjoy much more of her in heaven than I should have done had she survived me on earth. Lord, thy will be done; may my life be used for thy service while continued, and then put thou a period to it whenever thou pleasest.

MEDITATION XXIV.

THE SEVENTY-NINTH SACRAMENT, NOVEMBER 7, 1736.

The mournful recollections of affliction assuaged by contemplations on the love and sufferings of Christ.

I APPROACHED this ordinance with solemn and importunate prayer for the Divine presence, and I desire thankfully to record, that this prayer was not in vain. Perhaps I may say, that I never knew what it was to enjoy more of God than I this day enjoyed. Perhaps more of heaven is not to be brought down upon the earth. I write it with some amazement, that I stood upon the grave of my dear Betsey, and thought of that lovely creature, that was once, next to God, on the throne of my heart, with very little emotion. The loss of so amiable a child seemed hardly worth mentioning between God and my soul, when I saw before my eyes the memorials of a Redeemer's dying love; when I looked forward towards that heavenly world, to which I verily believe that God is conducting me, to which I apprehend that he will shortly bring me;—and I heartily subscribe my Amen to it.

Having discoursed in the pulpit on Christ, as the fountain opened, in which to wash from sin and from uncleanness, I introduced the ordinance with some reflections on that petition of the leper, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Matt. viii. 2. I observed, that he was sensible of his malady; that he apprehended himself polluted; and that the best souls will apprehend it most. He

applied therefore, to Christ, with a full persuasion of his power, although it were professedly the work of a God to do it. It is of great importance to approach this ordinance, believing that Christ can do it; and believing that he will do it. In the dying hour, then he will lay his hand upon us, and say, "I will that thou be perfectly clean; for ever clean." Blessed expectation! happy hour! How well is it worth our while to pass through every trial and agony in our way to it, that we may leave these polluted garments of flesh in the grave, and arise holy and immortal, into the heavenly presence.

When breaking the bread, I reflected that how, without that breaking of Christ's body, we had been crushed with the weight of the Divine vengeance. What was his love in instituting the ordinance! perhaps particularly foreseeing our pleasure in it; at least, seeing and causing it now, and rejoicing in our joy. We are pleased to see our friends cheerful at our table; pleased with our entertainment; much more is Christ so: therefore is he represented with amazing condescension, rejoicing as a bridegroom over his bride; and as joying over us with singing.

When taking the cup, I particularly insisted on our being made free by Christ from the devil, from worldly entanglements, corrupted affections, and the everlasting curse of God. We have, perhaps, a warm sense of liberty; what liberty can be compared with this? Lord, the desire of our souls is to the remembrance of thy name; it is the great thing that we would desire to have; a more affectionate remembrance of thee. Were I to choose a text for my last sermon, it should be this, "Whether present or absent, we may be accepted

of him." 2 Cor. v. 5. Delightful thought! that this labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

MEDITATION XXV.

THE EIGHTY-SECOND SACRAMENT, FEBRUARY 6, 1737.

Death swallowed up in victory by the sacrifice of the Redeemer.

I OPENED the ordinance with some reflections on those words, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." Matt. xxviii. 6. Look into the grave of Christ. See how low the justice of God hath laid him! Amazing sight, that the Lord of life should thus become as a dead corpse. Think how he lay in the abasement of the tomb. This his lowest humiliation; this the lowest state in which the human creature ever appears until putrefaction takes place. To this an eye of sense would have thought that he had been tending; but see from whence the faithfulness of God exalted him. He broke the bonds of death, by which it was impossible that he should long be held. Vain were the impotent attempts of sealing the sepulchre, and setting a watch. The angel broke the tomb, and dissipated the astonished guard; the sleeping Conqueror arose! Arose, to return no more to death. Not like Lazarus, therefore, coming forth in the dress of the dead; but, on the contrary, clothed with immortal life and vigour. He lives! He reigns! and has the keys of death and of the unseen world. Delightful thought! See the place where we must lie. Be it so. Death has no terror. The grave has lost its darkest gloom since Christ was laid in it. He left a perfume behind him, which, instead of the prison of the Divine

justice, makes it an easy bed to the believer. Well may we be willing to lie down in it, for he will surely bring us up again. He rose as a public signal; and when we have lain refining a while in it, he will surely bring us up again. This table has often changed its guests; many are fallen asleep in Christ, but they have not therefore perished. God is their God, although they lie in the dust, and will appear to be so. O blessed assembly and congregation! Thus shall the risen saint look down upon the grave like Israel on the Red Sea. Come, see the place where the people of Christ lay. See how entirely all the spoils are recovered, and not a fragment left behind.

In breaking the bread, I mentioned those words, "He hath abolished death." 2 Tim. i. 10. He has made it as nothing. Compare the death of the saint, and of the sinner. See the sinner trembling like cardinal Beaufort, who, when he died, did not lift up his hand to express any hope, with what we have seen, and I hope shall feel, of the saints' triumphing over death, and rejoicing in Christ, when breathing out their souls into his hands, and saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke ii. 29, 30.



MEDITATION XXVI.

THE EIGHTY-THIRD SACRAMENT, MAY 8, 1737.

The people of God as consecrated to his service.

THE subject of my discourse was, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;"

John xii. 32; and the subject of my meditation at the Lord's table was, "Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Psalm l. 5. I observed, that the people of God are represented as saints. This is an instructive thought. They are separated from the pollutions and vanities of the world, and entirely set apart to God, that they may be for him alone, and not for another; they are consecrated to him. They have made a covenant with him; a covenant in which they take him for their covenant God; give up all other expectations and dependences, and give themselves to him as his covenant people. They make a covenant with him by sacrifice; that is, they join themselves to him by the sacrifice of his Son. It is their very business at the table of the Lord, which is to be considered as a feast on a sacrifice. God will gather us together. He does it now; and it is a comfort much greater than to eat and drink these elements in secret would be. But then it is to be remembered, that there is another general assembly. Lord, "gather not my soul with sinners." There, where a particular scrutiny will be made, may our souls be bound up in the bundle of life. With what joy shall we then appear together, when not one soul will be wanting!

In breaking the bread, I observed, "Draw me, we will run after thee." Solomon's Song i. 4. May the Spirit sanctify and support us. On the whole, I found my heart too dead in much of this service. And I said few things in it which I can recollect as deserving a place here. Lord, forgive me. Lord, reform me. Lord, raise me to thyself; and fit me for thy ordinances on the earth, and for a state above the want of them!

MEDITATION XXVII.

THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH SACRAMENT, JULY 3, 1737.

The importance of the ordinance; and of the extraordinary mercy of God in the plan of Redemption.

FEW days of my life have been crowned with greater mercies than this, if I may reckon the preservation of my wife, the birth of a child, and, what is infinitely more than either, the communication of the most delightful consolations of God's presence, in the number of mercies.

I was much indisposed in the morning, yet not altogether without suitable supplies of strength and comfort. This evening I attended the Lord's table, and introduced the ordinance with those words of Christ. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;" John vi. 55., which in a literal sense would be perfectly absurd, but in a spiritual, contain the most excellent and important truths. Christ speaks of objects as appearing in the light, not of sense, but of faith; and, therefore, represents all other kinds of meat and drink as nothing when compared with this. It is the most excellent meat and drink. A man had better want any kind of food than this. Does it appear thus welcome to us? Let us bless God that he gives us this food, and that he gives us that communication of his Spirit whereby we should be engaged to feed upon it with delight. Do we owe our thanks to God for our daily bread? How much more, then, for this! What if we had been present, and almost dying with a parching thirst, when Moses brought water

from the rock, would not that miracle have affected us? It would have became us to have owned the Divine goodness in that respect; but O how much more in the present! Imagine yourselves standing around the rock. How would it have impressed you, that God should have given you that drink! much more may this. Nor is the way less wonderful of obtaining this drink that revives the soul. It was more probable he should thus have smitten the rock, than that he should have smitten his own Son! Who would at such a cost have manifested his love? Would we have fed a perishing friend with our flesh? should we part even with a limb, it would be great proof of love. Would we open the vital sluice of our blood to give him drink? Perhaps we might; but for whom? Surely, only for one of a thousand, and that the dearest and most amiable creature. But Christ did this for us, when we were enemies, and rebels, and that he might give life to our souls, and that we might not die. Yet our fathers are dead that ate this bread, as well as those that ate the manna in the wilderness. True. But yet they all live to God; and the last day will make it appear that the blood of Christ has not lost its efficacy with regard to any one of them.

In breaking the bread, I spoke of the pleasure of meeting Christ. When a friend has done us a kind office, we rejoice to thank him; but O, what are all the kind offices of our earthly friends to those that we receive from Christ! Let us thank him, let us adore his goodness. O blessed day, when we shall see him! Nay, but even now we may do it as well. We ourselves, and all our sentiments and actions, are now as open to the eye and observation of Christ as they will ever be;

let us, then, lift up our hearts immediately to him, and breathe out all the grateful sentiments of our souls before him.

At taking the cup, I observed, There is something moving in the sight of human blood, but how much more so if it were the blood of a friend who had been slain by treachery and cruelty! And did we come to the place, and see his blood lying there, would it not penetrate our hearts? We should perhaps, in a transport of tenderness, dip our handkerchief in the precious remains, and bequeath it as a sacred legacy to our children. But here is the blood of Christ! Ought it not to be dearer, infinitely dearer?



MEDITATION XXVIII.

THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH SACRAMENT, AUGUST 7, 1737.

The supreme happiness of the Christian constituted by the converse and favour of the Deity.

I INTRODUCED the ordinance with some scattered thoughts on those words, “Ye shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.” John xvi. 32. I began with observing the uncertainty of human friendship. The disciples of Christ, although under so many engagements to defend him, dispersed. They left him alone. So may we fall. I then observed the support of Christ—“The Father is with me.” Here was great faith: to believe the Father invariably present, and to rejoice in him, as sufficient, although deserted by human friends. So let us fix our hope in God, and place our happiness in a converse with him. May he ever be with us, espe-

cially in solitude; then we shall never be less forsaken than when we are alone.

Among some other meditations in breaking the bread, this was one:—If a prince were not only to send a pardon to a traitor, but to take him to his table; and not only so, but to admit him into his family, and to add, “I will make thee my child,” it would be amazing, it would be almost incredible; yet this does the Lord! Let it melt our hearts. How little does it signify what we lose, if we retain God, and his favour.

It was no small affliction to me to resign the society of that dear and amiable friend, (Miss Wilkinson,) who for now almost fourteen months has been the ornament and delight of my family, and in every circumstance during that time has behaved with a tenderness of friendship almost unparalleled, as well as with a strict and constant piety, from which the most confirmed Christian might have learned some useful lessons; but I have this day been enabled to resign her to God, owning his goodness in having enjoyed her converse here so long, and referring it to him whether our next meeting shall be at Northampton, in Yorkshire, or in heaven.

MEDITATION XXIX.

THE NINETIETH SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 2, 1737.

Personal remarks on some mournful and mysterious providences:—the Christian armed by faith to suffer all things.

DEAR MISS BLISS DYING.

THE wise and gracious, though mysterious, providence of God, has so ordered it in many instances,

that some of the greatest trials of my life have preceded a sacrament day: the death of Mr. Saunders; of Lady Russell; of my dear Betsey, and the yet dearer Mr. Some; and now, behold, a fifth blow this day falls upon me. The flattering hope I had conceived of the recovery of my dear friend and companion, I may say, of my *sister*, Miss Bliss—for no sister could be fonder of, or dearer to a brother—is taken away, and this sorrowful day, October 2, at the distance of a year, has shown me two of the saddest sights my eyes ever beheld—the burial of my dear child, and the life's blood of my dear friend, in whose kind arms she departed. My heart has this day been almost torn in pieces with sorrow; yet, blessed be God, not a hopeless, not a repining sorrow; but one so softened and so sweetened, that, with all its distress, I number this among the best days of my life; if that be good, which teaches us faith and love, and which cherishes the sentiments of benevolence and of piety. I desire very thankfully to acknowledge, that days of the sharpest trial have often been, to me, days of singular comfort.

This day, at the table of the Lord, I insisted a little on those words, “Can we drink of the cup, and refuse the cross?” putting it to my fellow Christians thus: you come to arm yourselves here; but boast not: can you bear losses? can you bear to be separated from your friends? can you leave life, even though in a violent manner? We would not immediately say, Lord, we are able, but, Thy will be done. We can do all things through Christ that strengthens us. Lead whither thou wilt, only let thine arm support us, and make our trials subservient to our eternal advantage.

I afterwards dropped some hints from those words; "If a man," whoever he be, "love me, he will keep my words." John xiv. 23. Lord, we desire to do so; speak, for thy servant hears. We come hither with a desire, not only to know, but to fulfil thy commands. "My Father will love him." O! to love God, and to be beloved by him, how desirable! "And we will come." Welcome, blessed Jesus! come into our very souls. "Come unto him, and make our" stated and constant "abode with him;" not being as a way-faring man that turns in for a night. Lord, if thou wilt dwell with us, it signifies little with whom we dwell; thy friendship, thy love, can make up the want of human friendship in its sweetest endearments.

In pouring out the cup, reflecting on what I had seen, I observed, that Christ died a bloody death, to impress our hearts; because we are apt to be impressed with the sight of a friend's blood, if he be wounded. How did the remembrance of that sad scene which the morning presented then cut me even to the heart! Why should not the blood of a Saviour impress me more? But such is the difference between sense and faith. I hope the remembrance of what I have seen and felt this day will long abide by me. My heart was, and is, full of Divine consolation; and the supporting views of my dear, I fear, dying, friend, with whom I have prayed three times this day, have comforted, rather than dejected me. May the glory be his from whom the grace comes; who has wrought these good things in her, and sealed both of us with his grace, as those who are to be companions in eternal glory. A thought which has now a relish which nothing can exceed, which nothing can equal.

MEDITATION XXX.

THE HUNDRED AND FOURTH SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 1, 1738.

Of perfect devotedness to the service of God.

I SEE it, with some surprise, that I have not written any memoirs of what has passed at the Lord's table since this time twelvemonth. It is impossible in a little space to recount what singular scenes of providence I have passed through since that time; but God has caused me in all to sing of mercy rather than of judgment; and I record it with all thankfulness.

This day I had been preaching, and, I bless God, with great enlargement, from these words, "Although my house be not so with God," &c. 2 Samuel xxiii. 5. The subject of my meditations at the table was, "Gather my saints together unto me," &c. Psalm l. 5. I observed, that God's people were saints; they were those who made a covenant with him by sacrifice. It was our purpose in that covenant to devote ourselves to his service, to submit ourselves to his disposal; we are now gathered together to do it. There is another gathering together, yet more important, at the great day; and we hope yet another, in his heavenly presence. It is pleasant now to assemble; how much more so will it then be! It is disagreeable to part with a dear friend; and how comfortable to think that there we shall never part!

In breaking the bread, I observed—This is bread from heaven! How should we have been

touched, if, being lost in a desert, God had sent down bread from heaven of the coarsest sort; and here is angels' food! Who are the creatures for whom this is done? Is it for us? for such poor sinners as we are?

I remember not particularly what passed in distributing the wine, only an exhortation to the spectators:—Are you all strangers? Are you all enemies?

In making the collection, I said, How much better to live on alms, than not to have a heart to give!

God was with me this day by the most evident tokens of his presence.

MEDITATION XXXI.

THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH SACRAMENT, JANUARY 7, 1739.

The peace of God, one of the greatest blessings enjoyed by the believer, with considerations on "the blood of sprinkling."

THERE have not been many public days of my life which have been more varied and mingled than this. I began it seriously; and, indeed, considering the extraordinary time that I spent in the devotions of the fast day and yesterday, as well as that it was the first Sabbath in the year, and that I had a very experimental and useful subject assigned me by my good friend, Mr. Browne, that is, Psalm xxvii. 14, I expected something considerable; and, perhaps, that was one reason why I succeeded no better. Another was, that I permitted myself to write some letters in the morning

which, though in the main serious, were not necessary, and thereby contracted the time of preparation, in too great a presumption on some late enlargements. The consequence on the whole was, that my spirits were very much straitened, and I preached to my own apprehension, very ill, although it pleased God to render it, in the main, acceptable and useful to several persons who heard me.

The subject of my meditations at the table of the Lord was, "The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace." Psalm xxix. 11. His people have peculiar reason to expect strength. I hope that we find it given. Here is an additional promise worthy our contemplation: "The Lord will bless his people with peace;" that is, *peace in life*,—calmness and serenity in their own consciences, as reconciled to themselves, when they can look inward, and see a pardoned, sanctified, and quickened spirit. Peace with God, and a sense of peace. Whereas he might long ago have said, "What hast thou to do with peace?"—And *peace at death!* Many of our dear friends (I particularly referred to Miss Bliss and Mrs. Wingate) had in a remarkable manner a sweet and calm serenity, in that awful hour which might throw nature into so much commotion and distress. And *peace to all eternity*; so that we should then enter into peace: no more war, no more alarm, no more sorrow. Christ is our peace; in him we have it, and that even while we have tribulation in the world.

In breaking the bread, I said, "In this was manifested the love of God." 1 John iv. 9. This is the most glorious display of it. Let the pagan, let the Mohammedan say, what has, on their

principles, been done for them comparable to this. Let the Jew boast that he calls Abraham, father; that God delivered his fathers from Egypt, settled them in Canaan, wrought them out wonderful deliverances there, sent them Moses and the prophets, and gave them his laws: nay, but he gives his Son to live, to die for us! He raised him to his own right hand, and has seated him in glory, and made him Head over all things.

Then, in pouring out the cup, I mentioned that text, "Ye are come—to the blood of sprinkling." Heb. xii. 22, 24. Do we not come to it? Do not our souls apply to it, and desire to be washed in it? It "speaketh better things" than "the blood of Abel." And in consequence of it, we are come to "the general assembly and church of the first-born." It is delightful to think, that we are come to a church on earth; to look round on such an assembly. O how much more important to look on an innumerable company of angels! To have seen one would have been a pleasant thing; but so to converse with them without any danger of idolatry; yea, to be numbered among their society, made equal to angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect!" It was delightful to converse with many saints now in glory, in the midst of all their imperfections and sorrows; but now that they are complete in holiness and glory, what admiration and joy would it give! We may now think with pleasure of coming even to God as a Judge; because his righteousness and justice are engaged to accept us through Christ.

Just before I took the cup I said, Thanks be to God, who already causeth us to triumph in Christ, and turns the greatest terrors into comfort; witness those three most dreadful words to an impeni-

tent sinner, death—judgment—eternity. O! now what a source of pleasure! *Death*—to get rid of sin and sorrow, to fall asleep in the arms of Christ. *Judgment*—to appear, to be rewarded and applauded. *Eternity*—to dwell for ever with God, and Christ; and with holy angels, and saints. O blessed words! Death—judgment—eternity! They are so, because the savour of Christ has been spread abroad upon our hearts.

MEDITATION XXXII.

THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH SACRAMENT, FEBRUARY 4, 1739.

Of the majestic character of the Messiah in his offices.

THE leading subject of our meditation was that text in Micah, (having been preaching on God's promise of giving to his sheep eternal life,) "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." Micah v. 4. In which words I observed—1. A view of the diligence and piety of the Redeemer; "He shall stand and feed:" intimating, that he shall be a watchful Shepherd, and take care of his flock; and he shall do so "in the strength of the Lord," and "in the majesty of the name of his God;" implying a dependence on Divine assistance. This Christ showed in all his ministrations. "I honour my Father;—I seek not my own glory, but his that sent me;—The works which my father has given me to do;—This command received I from my Father" &c.—2. The

glorious display of the Divine power in him: "He shall stand in the majesty of the name of his God." Christ's works were very majestic; much of God appeared in them. Were a man to cure only one blind or lame person, to raise up only one dead body to life, what a glory would it reflect upon him! The miracles of Christ, for number, for excellence, were unparalleled.—3. The perpetuity of his interest: "They shall abide;" that is, in Christ, and as his flock in all ages. Accordingly, it is so. In vain the terrors, in vain the learning and wit, of the world are armed against him: and it is observable, that most of the writers against Christianity have been left to dishonour themselves by vile immoralities.—4. The extent of it: He is "great unto the ends of the earth." Accordingly, we see it. We live in a country then almost unheard of, yet He is great among us. Perhaps idolatrous worship was paid on the very spot of ground on which we now are; yet we honour him; and we are gathered as into his fold. He makes us to lie down in green pastures. Blessed be his name, that we are not in dry and withered pastures, under dead ordinances. We lie down by the still waters, and are not troubled by persecutors; we are not obliged as our fathers were, to disguise our sacred table with common meat, that, in case of a sudden surprise, it might not be known.

In breaking the bread, I observed, Lord, we are unworthy of a thought, of a word, a tear of thine, much more of a drop of thy blood; yet all is given for us! Let us, then, be deeply humbled before thee.

On drinking of the wine, I said, Christ our Forerunner has entered within the veil. Joyful

news, if on his own account: but not only on that—he has entered for us; has entered as our Fore-runner, intimating our quickly entering also; therefore shall we be raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places. I congratulate you on this. Look up to Christ as your Head, and enlarge your desires for the propagation of his kingdom. Would you not, then, receive the cup which is the communion of the blood of Christ? Have you not need of it? Would you not thankfully submit yourselves to it, and to that way of saving grace in the gospel?

MEDITATION XXXIII.

THE HUNDRED AND NINTH SACRAMENT, MARCH 4, 1739.

The blessed may triumph in the thoughts of Heaven.

I INTRODUCED the ordinance with a meditation on those words in the Revelation, chap. vii. verse 9 and 10: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Let us observe, who this blessed company were, how they were situated, and how they were employed.

First—They were a vast multitude. Although the fold of Christ on earth is little, and the gate strait, yet in heaven it is great, because it takes in

infants. How many little creatures, having for a little while borne the image of the earthly Adam, bear that of the heavenly! And in the latter days many shall be brought in; the way shall be wider, and many shall say, "Come, let us walk in it." It is a various society, not confined to the Jews, but of all nations and kingdoms; our own, through grace, is eminently distinguished. Let us acknowledge the goodness of God therein; and that, in our language, a multitude of holy souls, being dead, yet speak.

Secondly — In what a situation: clothed in bright robes of purity, of victory, and of joy; with palms in their hands, as conquerors over sin, Satan, the world, and death. How joyful that triumph, and how completely secured by salvation appointed as its walls and bulwarks!

Thirdly—How they are employed: in humble worship, ascribing salvation (not in wishing it) to Him that sitteth upon the throne, to their God. They consider him as on the throne; they see how lofty, how radiant, how firm; and this God is our God. The bands of nature are often broken, but those that ally Him to us shall never be broken. They also ascribe salvation to the Lamb, remembering their obligation to suffering love. How doth humility mingle itself with all the honours and joys of the heavenly world;—the Lamb feeds them, and takes them to the fountains of living water.

In breaking the bread, my meditations turned on the Lamb of God. How wonderful that His Son should ever be so represented! And when this Lamb suffered, it was to take away the sin of the world—to take away our sin.

In pouring out the cup, I alluded to the Jewish

benediction, "Blessed be God, who hath created the fruit of the vine." What a vine is ours! how refreshing its shade, how sweet its fruit, how strong its root! No wind shall blast, no worm corrode it; we shall sit under its shadow for ever. I met with very much of God this day, and my soul has been greatly established.

MEDITATION XXXIV.

THE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH SACRAMENT, JUNE 3, 1739.

The pardon of sin renders trials light in the estimation of a Christian.

JUST as I went in to the ordinance, those words accidentally, or rather providentially, occurred to me: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more." Zeph. iii. 14, 15. I observed the exhortation and the ground of it: the exhortation to joy, and that of an extraordinary nature, "To sing, to shout, to be glad with all the heart." Our joys in this world are allayed, there is a great mixture of sorrow in them all, and a speedy end of all the things that we rejoice in. There is little reason to be glad with all the heart here, and rather, a prudent reserve should be maintained. But it is not so now; herein we may dilate our souls; we may sweetly open our hearts wide to joy, if we have this foundation for it. Addressing the believers, it is said, "He

hath taken away thy judgments." Not thine afflictions, they continue; but the sting is taken out, because the sentence of destruction is reversed; and then, if there is no condemnation, how light other things may sit! O Lord, correct me, but not in thine anger. "He hath cast out thine enemy." I know not, and I am not very solicitous to know, to what enemy this immediately refers; the great enemy is expelled, Satan, falling like lightning from heaven; the accuser of the brethren is cast out. "The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee." God is become our King. O pleasant thought! "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice!" He is still in the midst of thee; he dwells with thee, thy Sovereign evermore. It was a great privilege to dwell in Zion, where God visibly resided. His special presence is of far greater importance: separate that, and the cloud had been but a vapour. "Thou shalt not see evil any more;" not unmingled evil, not such as thou hast formerly seen—no more return to that condemnation, to that captivity: and thou shalt ere long be raised above the sight of all evil, whether of sin or of punishment. Look around, and see what evil pains thy heart, and wounds thy eyes; it shall then be entirely and for ever done away. Let us encourage ourselves in the Lord our God to believe this, reviewing the promises again and again, with greater confidence and joy.

In breaking the bread, I remarked, The covenant, how sure! If you had promised me any thing, I should think it safe: can Christ forget to remember? can he want power and faithfulness?

I addressed myself to God before taking the cup, as in self-dedication, and then spoke to the

spectators: Is there not one of you that loves Christ?—is there not one who desires him? not one who would devote himself to him? Yes, surely there are many. Come, then, and welcome.

MEDITATION XXXV.

THE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 7, 1739.

Holy and delightful anticipations under the assurance of being enabled to serve the cause of God in the world during life, and by his writings after death.

GOD has been pleased to meet my soul this day in ordinances in an uncommon degree. As I was going to the house of God I passed by my dear children, Polly and Mercy, Phil. and Celia, and was lifting up my heart to God for them, that they might every one of them be the support and ornament of religion, when, I know not how, there darted into my mind, with a peculiar energy, as if spoken to me, those words which I knew were originally spoken to my great Lord, in comparison of whom I am but as dust and ashes, “He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.” Isaiah liii. 10. What these words peculiarly intend I know not, neither would I absolutely conclude from them that I shall live many years; or see my children planted in the church: but of this, through grace, I am well persuaded; that I shall see my spiritual seed; that I shall prolong eternal days of joy and glory in heaven; and that God will make the good pleasure of his grace, in the

conversion and establishment of his chosen people, prosperous in my hand, both while I live, and when I am dead, by what I shall leave behind me, written, I hope, in the spirit of the gospel; written, I am sure, with an undissembled zeal for his honour and interest, which he that searches my heart, and sees all its secret workings, assuredly knows.

I preached on these words; "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you:" John xiv. 18; and I introduced the ordinance with the following words: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." John xiv. 19, 20. I observed that the true Christian sees Christ when invisible to the world. The sight of him for a small part of forty days was comparatively but little; the words rather refer to the vision of his grace in heaven. Many of us know what they mean; looking through his word, through his providence; we know what it is, through his ordinances, to see Christ;—we rejoice in the sight already given, and we are breathing after that yet to be bestowed. "Because I live, ye shall live also." This sight of Christ, as a living Redeemer, gives us a derived life from him sure as his own! While he lives, while he has grace and glory at his disposal, no true believer shall fail of either. O, blessed hope! when it enters the soul, how does it raise our thoughts of Christ! When we feel Divine vigour communicated from him, then do we know that he is in the Father: then do we possess his participation of Divine honours, and know that as he is in us by the power of his grace, so we are also in him;—our names are written upon his heart, and we are in-

terested in him, as our covenant Head, and as our sure Redeemer.

Many comfortable, although plain thoughts arose in breaking the bread and in pouring forth the wine, especially those of triumph in the text above mentioned, Christ "shall see his seed." I hope this applies to us among the rest, and that with us his days shall be prolonged to eternal ages, and his cause go on successfully. O that what I have this day been saying and doing in the house of God may confirm this! I have devoted myself to God in the bonds of his covenant. May I ever retain it upon the imagination of the thoughts of my heart.

I mentioned at the collection, the case of the heathen emperor, that is, of Titus, who accounted the day lost in which he had done no good! May I never more see that lost day! but either in spirituals or in temporals, or rather, if it be the good will of my God, in both, may I be doing good every day.

This was the birth day of my dear eldest daughter Betsey, whose name continues written, perhaps too deeply, on my heart. But blessed be God that gave her, and that hath taken her away. I adore his love, as well as his justice, in the loss I so much lamented; and I rejoice in the cheerful hope that I have of meeting her in a world of eternal glory. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

MEDITATION XXXVI.

IN WHICH MY SOUL WAS BREATHING AFTER GOD.
NOVEMBER 2, 1739.

Solemn aspirations of praise and gratitude for the Divine protection and favour in individual particulars.

O MY God! thou art my hope, and my help; my glory, and the lifter up of my head;—my heart rejoices in thy salvation. When I set myself to converse with thee under the influence of thine Holy Spirit, a thousand delightful thoughts spring up at once; a thousand sources of pleasure are unsealed, and flow in upon my soul with such refreshment and joy, that they seem to crowd into every moment the happiness of hours, of days, and of weeks.

I praise thee, O Lord, for this soul of mine, which thou hast created, and which thou hast taught to say, and I hope to purpose, “Where is God my Maker?” Job xxxv. 10. I bless thee for the knowledge with which thou hast adorned it. I bless thee for that grace with which I may, with humble wonder, say thou hast sanctified it, although, alas! the celestial plant be fixed in too barren a soil, and does not flourish to the degree that I could wish. I praise thee, my God, for that body which thou hast given me, and which thou preservest as yet in its strength and vigour, capable not merely of relishing those entertainments which thou grantest to each of its senses, but, what is, I hope, to me far more valuable, capable of acting with some vigour in thy service. I bless

thee for the ease and freedom with which these limbs of mine move themselves, and obey the dictates of my spirit, I hope, as guided by thine. I bless thee, that the keepers of the house do not yet tremble, nor the strong men bow themselves; that those who look out at the windows are not darkened, nor the daughters of music, or the instruments of speech, brought low. I bless thee, O Lord, my God, that the silver cords are not loosened, nor the golden bowl broken; for it is thine hand that braces all my nerves, and thine infinite skill which prepareth those spirits that flow in so freely, and, when exhausted, are recruited so soon, and so plentifully. I praise thee, for that munificence with which thou providest for my daily support; for that various table which thou spreadest before me, and for the overflowing cup which thou puttest into my hands. And I praise thee, that these bounties of thy providence do not serve, as it were, to upbraid a disabled appetite, and are not like messes of meat set before the dead. That no relaxation of the nerves weakens my strength, so as to render it incapable of digesting my food, nor cankers torture my mouth, so as to render it incapable of receiving it. I bless thee, that I eat not my morsel alone, but share it with so many agreeable friends; that my affectionate wife, and my lovely children, and my hopeful and grateful pupils, are with me like olive plants set around my table. And I thank thee for so many friends who are capable of serving me, and so many whom I am capable of serving; and by conversing with whom, through the liberality of the former, I know how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. I thank thee for a heart that can feel the sorrows of the necessitous, and a mind that

can, as in this day, make it my earliest care and morning refreshment to contrive for their relief. For this also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts. Thou awakenest my spirit to seek the way; thou graciously pointest it out, and I humbly hope that thou wilt crown it with success.

And now, O my God, what shall I say? what, but that I love thee above all in the power of language to express. While I feel thy sacred Spirit breathing upon my heart, and exciting these fervours of love to thee, I cannot doubt of its influence, any more than I can doubt of the truth of this animal life while I exert the acts of it. Surely, if ever I knew the appetite of hunger,—my soul hungers after righteousness, and longs for a greater conformity to thy blessed nature and will. If ever my palate felt thirst,—my soul thirsts for God, even the living God! and for a more abundant communication of his favour. If ever my weary body knew what it was to wish for the refreshment of my bed, and longed for rest,—even so my soul, with sweet acquiescence, rests upon thy gracious bosom, O my heavenly Father, and returns to its repose in the embraces of its God, who has dealt so bountifully with it. And if ever I saw the face of a beloved friend or child with complacency and joy,—so I rejoice in beholding thy mercy, O Lord, and in calling thee my Father in Christ. Such thou art, and such thou wilt be for time, and for eternity. What have I more to do but to commit myself to thee for both, and leave thee to choose my inheritance, and order my affairs for me, while all my business is to serve thee, and all my delight to praise thee. My soul follows hard after my God, because his right

hand supports me. Let it still bear me up, and I shall still press forward. Amen.

MEDITATION XXXVII.

HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH SACRAMENT DECEMBER 2, 1739.

Of Christ as being the brightness of his Father's glory.

NEVER have I been so frequently at the table of the Lord within so short a period. I have now been four times there within five Sabbaths; having administered the ordinance at Newport and Welford, since the last time at Northampton; and I bless God, at both places with some pleasure, and I hope with some improvement.

This day I heard, with unutterable pleasure, dear Mr. Orton preach one of the best sermons that ever was preached of the service of Christ. Blessed be God, who has given him such gifts and graces. My sermon was a very poor thing in comparison to it. But I speak in the sincerity of my heart, and in the sincerity of my heart have I praised the God of all grace, that the disciple was so much above his master. May the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit be multiplied ten thousandfold upon him, and may thousands yet unborn have reason to call him blessed!

I introduced the ordinance with some meditations on these words: "Who being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. i. 3. I had been preaching of Christ

giving himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to sanctify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. And this seemed well connected with that text. It gives us a view of the grandeur of Christ's person; and of the happy success of his undertaking. The grandeur of his person:—he was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; that is, the Being who of all others bore most of the image of God. Much, indeed, is reflected from good men here, and much more from glorified spirits above, and more especially from the angels. But, O, all these stars disappear in the presence of the Sun of righteousness! He is the very effulgence of his Father's glory, and as if none but he bore his image. And he, having created all things, does, also, by the word of his power uphold them. He spake, and we existed. To what purpose is he mentioned? Even to this, that he by himself has purified us from our sins. He did not assign the office to any other; he did not consign it over to any meaner person; he did not say to the brightest cherub, "Go, and become incarnate, and submit to death for the redemption of sinful man. Go, and give thy back to the smiters; stretch out thine arms on the cross." No; he did not substitute another, but he endured it himself, to purge us from evil, and to expiate our sins. And the consummation is, that he has sat down at the right hand of God, which speaks the Father's acceptance of the atonement which he has made; else he would never have released him from the tomb,—much less would he have set him down at his own right hand. And it also proclaims his honour and glory. The Majesty on high has received him there. His human nature is instated in a

place of supreme dignity and glory, of supreme joy and happiness. And thither is he gone as our Forerunner. Where he is, there we shall be also; that is, at the right hand of God! And there is fulness of joy, and there are pleasures for evermore.

MEDITATION XXXVIII.

HINTS OF SOME MEDITATIONS ON THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST SACRAMENT, JANUARY 7, 1740.

The character and happiness of the true Christian.

THIS was the very day that my dear friend, Mr. Palk, died, which was indeed a very sorrowful exercise to me, and my fears of that approaching calamity were painful; yet I bless God, that I had some comfortable impressions at his table from those words, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever." Psalm xxii. 26. I observed, that this scripture united in one express view the character and happiness of the true Christian. The character:—they are those who are meek on the earth, and who seek the Lord. They are meek under provocation; and this not through a meanness of soul, but through a true greatness. They do not think so highly of provocations as many do. They give up self-interest; and they see so much to pity in the offender, that they are ready to forgive the offence; and that even where the injury is greatest. And the view of their great Master promotes this. They remember, how he

was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter." They think of his dying words, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do!" Luke xxiii. 34. And they carry this meekness so far as not only to pardon, but to love, and to pray for their enemy.

Think, Christians, are there any that have injured and offended you? May the Lord forgive them: may the Lord bless them with spiritual blessings. "What do I wish more, than for the conversion, reformation, and salvation of my greatest enemy: and that not for the satisfaction of seeing him humbled before me. Lord, if I were sure he would forget that he had ever injured me I should rejoice in the thought." Considering meekness in general as humility, it is the Christian's character; he quiets himself before God, and his soul is as a weaned child, that, if it cannot have the breast, soon grows quiet without it, and reconciles itself to such food as it may have. A deep sense of meanness and of guilt before God humbles the soul. And when is it more humbled than at this ordinance, when it sees itself at table with the King of heaven, and looks forward to its complete felicity? Delightful, yet abasing thought! and delightful because abasing. "Who am I, O Lord, and what is my service, that thou hast brought me hither?" They seek God, through Christ:—they seek God; they see how desirable his favour is, and they long for it above all things; they have a certain nobleness and generosity of soul which engages them to long, to pray, to cry for the Divine presence, which they expect through Christ. They see grace dwelling in him, dwelling with men for his sake; they therefore seek an interest in Christ with the greatest ardour—with none but Christ; and they are seeking him continually,

well knowing what the presence of Christ means. Then consider his blessing; "They shall eat, and be satisfied" with the provision of their own table, and their own loaf: their table is blessed; wherever it be, how mean soever their lot, they have what God has sent; they are in the condition which he has chosen, which is always vastly better than what we have deserved: it is his great goodness, they say, to choose thus; and to choose nothing for the present greater. "Prosperity might have destroyed me. O, sweet to think, that all comes from the hand of my God." In this sense, the little that a righteous man hath, is better than the abundance of the wicked; yea, sweet is a dinner of herbs with His love. The Christian is satisfied still more with the provisions of God's table. Royal fare! and yet what to an eye of sense? who has not every day better?—a morsel of bread, a little sup of wine; who would purchase them by the time spent here? But thy loving-kindness, Lord, is infinitely better than food. To feed by faith upon Christ; O how tasteful is this heavenly manna! O how reviving in this sense is his blood! This is meat indeed, and this is drink indeed." How often are the Christian's hopes so enlightened, and his soul so nourished, that he rises in the strength of its expectation, and goes many days' journey to the house of his God.

"They shall praise the Lord;" and how pleasant is that, when the heart overflows with love! it even revives our animal nature, and is, as it were, an anticipation of heaven. "Your heart shall live for ever." Short words, but O how comprehensive!—when the soul bears forward in its ideas, and launches into the ocean of eternity; when it presses forward through the immensity of

space; when it measures its duration no more by days, by years, by centuries, by ages, or by millions of ages, but finds itself encircled in the omnipresence of the eternal God. When I fall into such contemplations as these, when I see these opening scenes, I think I am still with thee; that thou art still my God, that still I shall praise thee:—then, ever living, my heart shall beat high with everlasting joy, and, its motion never ceasing, its pulse shall never tremble nor grow faint, but spring on with everlasting vigour. Delightful thought! Let this heart that thus shall live for ever now ascend in a flame of holy love to its God and Father, and pour itself out in lively prayers to him.

MEDITATION XXXIX.

BRIEF RECOLLECTIONS OF WHAT PASSED AT THE LORD'S
TABLE, OCTOBER, 1741.

Christ's spiritual presence with his Church.

THIS day was lamentably remarkable to me on one account, though most pleasantly so on another. This day was the last Sabbath that I spent with my dear and delightful friend, Mr. Orton, who preached in the morning from those words, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii. 5. I, in harmony with him, discoursed at the table from these, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Matt. xxviii. 20. I considered in what circumstances the words were spoken, and what they contain. They were spoken by Christ, when he was leaving the disciples, and

they were grieved that his bodily presence, which no doubt was very delightful, was to be with them no more. They were spoken when he was but recently and triumphantly risen from the grave, and was going into the presence of his heavenly Father. His apostles were going out into the world under many difficulties; but he intimates that his presence in Spirit should be sufficient;—as if he had said, “I will be with you—with me you can fear nothing.” “Lord, if it be thou,” says Peter, “bid me come unto thee on the water.” Matt. xiv. 28. I can tread this stormy sea, if thou wilt lead, and if thou wilt support me. “I am with you,” says our great Leader, “to strengthen and succeed you in your work.” O what delight did it give to the apostles, when he added, “even unto the end of the world. Amen.” But did he mean his apostles alone? Why should he mean that? Would not the same principle that engaged him to be tender to them, lead him also to a gracious care of us? Undoubtedly it would. Then he speaks even now. Lo! behold it! attend to it; reflect upon it with wonder, that Christ, by a Divine and spiritual presence, will still be with every minister, and that for the sake of the church, He will show his love to every Christian. Let us be bold in this: put our Amen to it, and say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear labour nor suffering, nor the loss of my dearest friends; he will support me; he will be with me in life; and, after my death, he will be with succeeding Christians and ministers; yes, and with me too—with me, in a literal sense, to the end of the world:—with me, till this scheme of salvation on earth be accomplished; and at the end of the world he will reanimate me, and receive me to glory, confessing me

before men, and giving me an abundant entrance into his heavenly kingdom. O delightful view! O blessed hope! Let me, then, be ever with him, and do all in my power to exert myself for his service;—and let me make myself easy as to the support of his church in the world; for whatever may rise up against it, lo! he is with us alway, and then, greater is he who is with us, than all those who are against us. That which can destroy the Head shall destroy the members; but while he lives and reigns, he will support them.”

MEDITATION XL.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WHAT PASSED AT THE LORD'S TABLE,
* * * 1741.

Christ anointed by the Father.

THE subject of my meditation was those remarkable words of Isaiah, li. 16, which I considered as spoken by the Father to Christ: “I have put my words in thy mouth. I have hid thee in the hollow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.”* Observe the regard God expressed to our Lord, and the purposes for which he designed him. The regard expressed to him, “I have put my words in thy mouth.” God gave him plenary inspiration in the highest sense.

* Dr. Doddridge appears to have varied the reading here. In the common version the verse runs thus: “I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand.”

The words he spoke were not his own, but the Father's who sent him. He gave not the Spirit by measure unto him, but anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. He therefore brought the most perfect revelation of God to men, and opened the most glorious scheme of salvation. He indeed brought good tidings, and published peace, and said unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! And God concealed him in the hollow of his hand: that is, he reserved him until the proper time, the fulness of time, in which he was to be exhibited; and then he protected him in the midst of danger by his secret, but ever watchful power, until the time came when he was delivered for our offences; watching over him, even when he continued among the dead, and at length raising him up for our justification. And what were the glorious purposes for which all was accomplished? The immediate purpose was, to say unto Zion, Thou art my people; but more remotely, to establish the earth, and to plant the heavens. By Him God gathers a church in the world. He raises that sacred edifice on Mount Sion; chooses to himself a people in Christ, and declares to them the happy relation in which they stand; gives them the promises, and the seals of his covenant; and even by these ordinances he says, Thou art my people;—admitting us into a degree of intimacy and freedom of Divine communion, unknown under the institutions of Moses. The high priest went within the veil but once a year; none but the priest within the house, and none but the Levites within the courts. But now the way to the holiest of all is laid open by the blood of Jesus; and the foundations of the earth are laid, or rather, established. God would not have maintained this earth to have been only

the habitation of accursed and ruined creatures, therefore, that scheme which insured to Him a people, established it. All things are done for the elect's sake. For them, he is made Head over all; and might say, with infinitely greater propriety than did David, "All the foundations of the earth are out of course; I bear up the pillars of it." Psalm lxxxii. 5; lxxv. 3. And it is indeed His Spirit, which supports all that piety which there is in the world, and which has been throughout all the past ages of his people. In which respect He may possibly say to some, as he did to Cyrus, I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me. And all this is, that he may plant the heavens; that he may conduct thither a colony from the earth, and fill those vacant seats which the rebel angels left. All this is, that he may raise from this nursery here below, planted by his hand, and watered by his word, ordinances, and Spirit, young plants to set in the heavenly world, where they shall for ever flourish near the streams of the fountain of life. For ever adored be Divine grace, which has thus honoured us, who deserved long since to have been rooted out of the earth; to have been cast out of his garden with dishonour as noisome weeds; to have been cut down as cumberers of the ground. Yet with us will he plant the heavens!—He will cause us to shine as the firmament; and as, I trust, many of us will be instrumental in turning many to righteousness, and thus shine as the stars for ever and ever. Nay, the meanest and weakest Christian may say more than that, as the views of the gospel rise on those of the prophets; for our Lord tells us, they "shall shine forth like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." Matt. xiii. 43.

In breaking the bread, I mentioned the text of sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. Matt. viii. 11. It would have been delightful to have conversed with good old Jacob; to have seen him even on his dying bed acknowledging that God had fed him all his life long to that moment; delightful to have been with him at Bethel, when in his prosperity there he recognised the Divine faithfulness, and accomplished his vows;—delightful to have known pious Isaac, who, as a type of our blessed Redeemer, so willingly surrendered himself to God, and his father, and was stretched out with all the meekness of a lamb, when appointed to be a burnt offering. And who would not have been delighted to have had an interview with Abraham, the father of us all; that holy man, to whom God has done that signal honour, that all believers of every age and nation should be looked upon as his seed: that holy man, who walked before God, and was perfect, and who is now a guest of distinguished glory at the table above, as he had once the honour to entertain some of the inhabitants of heaven at his hospitable board below.

To sit down, and not only with these holy patriarchs, but with all the apostles of the Lamb; with those illustrious soldiers and leaders in the army of Christ, to whom the whole Christian world has been so much indebted, and to whom we in particular have had such great obligations on account of those memoirs of Christ, and that history of his gospel, which they have given us. And with John, who leaned on the Redeemer's bosom. With Paul, whose divine epistles we have so often read with rapture, and something of whose spirit, I hope, we have sometimes caught. It would have been de-

lightful to have met with any one of these apostles in their travels, and to have joined with them in breaking bread when they administered this ordinance. But their knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom is now infinitely increased. Then they saw as through a glass darkly; then they spoke with trembling accents. Now they see face to face, and have learned the language of heaven. But O—let our souls remember it with holy joy, and a fervent, growing desire of that blessed interview—we shall there behold not only the apostles of the Lamb, but the Lamb himself! Yea, it is said, the Lamb himself “shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water.” Rev. vii. 17. How delightful will the relish of this water be, which he shall give us! How reviving the wine, which we shall drink with him in his kingdom! It will then be no grievance of heart to us, that we have, according to his appointment, paid this humble honour to his cross upon earth, and have devoted ourselves to him as his covenant people in this holy rite of his own institution.

I then addressed myself to the spectators, expressing my hope that they had communion with us, and in good wishes that they might have more. I mentioned my own experience before I sat down at the Lord’s table, and my cheerful hope that God would draw them with a victorious sweetness of correction.

MEDITATION XLI.

SOME ACCOUNT OF WHAT PASSED AT THE SACRAMENT,
JANUARY 3, 1742.

Of the peace of God, as enjoyed by the Christian under the covenant of the gospel.

THE subject of my meditation at the table of the Lord was those words; "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him." Isaiah lvii. 19. We are now in a circumstance of praise, which is "the fruit of the lips." I observed with what majesty God claims to be the Creator of those fruits that were offered to him. It may indeed be said, "Of thine own have we given thee." It is a new creation of his own. He has given the matter and the heart for it; especially in these instances. The Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed his church with his blood; this was the gift of the Divine bounty; redemption by him was the contrivance of the Divine grace, and so is a disposition of soul to accept of this salvation, and to pray to God for it. Why are we not like the mad herd who call themselves the wise men of this world, despising this gracious Redeemer? or why are we rejoicing in his salvation, and not mourning and lamenting, and fetching our arguments of sorrow and distress from the very message that Christ has brought? It is God that has created this fruit of praise. He has caused the wilderness to bloom with this plant of paradise; and all the solemn desert, where no sound but doleful

notes of sorrow and despair might have been heard, to resound with anthems of social joy! The blessed God condescends to reckon this up as it were among his royal prerogatives, and places the fruit of the human lips among the tributes in which he particularly delights! Yea, he utters it with a kind of sacred triumph, and repeats it to express the certainty of the fact, and to express the delight with which he publishes the tidings of it. "Peace! peace! unhappy creatures as you are, you have been at war with me, but I grant you peace. I not only send you the tidings of it, but I bring it myself; now I see that you are humbled in my presence, in the breaking of your soul;" for to such the context speaks. "I assure you that I am willing to be at peace with you; willing to give you all the joys of prosperity. Believe it from my own lips. Believe it, and echo it back with a sacred pleasure; and let this be the first-fruit of your lips, 'Peace, peace!' I speak it to him that is afar off, and to him that is near; to Jews and Gentiles, to all the world that will receive it." Peace is actually granted to him that is come near. Peace is proposed to him that is yet at a distance. This blessed peace is proclaimed to you who have approached this table in the sincerity of your hearts; to you who surround it; and to you who do not partake of the ordinance, if you seek that Lord whom we here commemorate, and do not absent yourselves in contempt; though surely it will be your wisdom, as soon as possible, more solemnly to declare your acceptance of his grace. "I will heal him, saith the Lord" (that is, the afflicted humble soul, be he who he may.) "My wounds were the wounds of a friend, not those of an enemy. And as I have

wounded, so will I heal; as I have broken, so will I bind up." For all this let us return our praises; let us renew this covenant of peace; let us devote ourselves to God's service with greater determination than ever, and let us do so according to the free access which is given us, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way which he has consecrated. May the Holy Spirit in this ordinance take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us, a blessing for which the ancient church used especially to pray at this holy ordinance.

MEDITATION XLII.

AT THE SACRAMENT, APRIL 11, 1742.

The pious soul refreshed under the blessings of Christianity; and of the Resurrection of the Just.

GOD was pleased in a very particular manner to indulge me in all the duties of this day, drawing out my soul in earnest desires after him, and melting me to sentiments of uncommon gratitude in prayer and in the preaching of his word, when the approach of the day of death and of judgment was urged with great life and zeal, as an engagement to activity in good works, and to a holy conversation. Adored be Divine grace, that I then most deeply felt what I spoke, and that every word came from the soul.

At the table of the Lord my meditations were, by a conversation with Mary Wills, directed to those words, "Times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts iii. 19. I

observed, that times of refreshment in a natural sense had come, by the plentiful rain which God had just been pouring out upon the ground; but that nobler refreshment was to be expected by the intercourse which the holy soul has with God, when extraordinary communications of his Spirit are poured out upon his church, and much more, when he shall, in his time, send Jesus Christ, his Son, from heaven at the day of the resurrection. Intercourse with God in ordinances is refreshing. His love manifested to the soul, is like a cloud of the latter rain; therefore he says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Hos. xiv. 5. See how the earth opens, and seems to breathe forth and to pant for refreshing showers; so does the pious soul long for God, and for his grace. The cool, refreshing delights of his favour nourish the soul, and the heart rejoices: like a bright shining after rain, when the flowers open their sweets, so then every ornament of piety grows more visible, and your souls shall be like a watered garden. It is not by ordinances alone that this is effected; they are, at best, but streams of water flowing near a garden, until he, as it were, by his own hand pours them upon it; or rather, until he rains down the refreshing influences of his grace from heaven.

There shall be times of refreshment, when the interest of God shall be revived. The world is a barren wilderness: "But I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," Isaiah xliv. 3; saith the Lord. It will be refreshing, if this be upon our barren spot at home; if God pours out his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring. And if he extends it round about us; if he thus waters this island of ours—a garden cultivated indeed, but which, alas!

wants rain. If he pours it forth upon remote portions of the world, and causes the wilderness to blossom like a rose!—On whom does not his sun arise? and on whom does not his rain descend! O that it may be thus with regard to gospel ordinances, and to the influences of his grace! O that his people may be made willing in the day of his power! that so he may have the youth for his heritage; and that in number the young converts may be like the drops of dew, born from the womb of the morning. This would be a delightful prospect. This would give our souls unutterable pleasure. This would, indeed, teach us to exclaim, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.” Luke ii. 29, 30.

But there is another time, and one of yet nobler refreshment, which shall undoubtedly come from the presence of the Lord, and in which we shall each of us have our own part; when Christ, whom the heavens are to retain till the time of the restitution of all things, shall come to set all things in order. Great disorder there seems to be, and it seems a mystery, that so many millions of his servants should die, and turn to dust. But he will roll away that reproach. He will make their death the everlasting monument of his power, and of his grace. How finely is this expressed in Isaiah; “Thy dead men shall live,” (speaking to the church,) “together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust.” Awake, and tune your new-made tongues to anthems of immortal joy and thankfulness: “for thy dew is as the dew of herbs;” Isaiah xxvi. 19; that is, a plentiful dew shall fall upon you, whose bones have been scattered like chips of wood upon

the borders of the grave. A copious dew from the Lord shall descend upon you, and the earth shall cast forth her dead! A sumptuous and a glorious harvest shall suddenly cover the face of the earth! O how delightful a view! How refreshing to behold! How much more so to partake of that triumph! Some have thought, that those who were raised out of their graves at the resurrection of Christ ascended to heaven with him. Suppose that it had been so, and that they had all been assembled with him around the mount, and ascended to heaven in his train, what a pleasing sight to his disciples! How much more glorious a spectacle shall this be, which we shall not only behold, but share!—O my friends, in the view of it we feel a refreshment, and we may well believe it, for we see some things before our faces containing the memorial of a past fact, far more wonderful than this. The wonder is, that Christ should become incarnate and die; not that he should rise and ascend: and that, having died for his people, yet he should leave them for a while under the power of death; not that he should at length redeem them from it. Let us, then, commemorate that great transaction, which throws so beautiful a light upon the other, and which lays so glorious a foundation for our expectation of it.

At the Lord's table, I urged the propriety of grateful returns, and put in my claim, in the name of Christ, to urge upon all the duty of love and service—the constant, faithful, zealous service, of all who would indeed believe in him. “What have you done for him since you were last at the Lord's table? What will you do for him in the interval of time before the next? What can you contrive to do for his interest?”

(Memorandum.) After this ordinance I thought of an expedient—to write a letter to dissenting ministers, to be delivered after my death to those who, for the time being, should be in the places to be mentioned in a codicil to my will.

MEDITATION XLIII.

ON THE SACRAMENT, JANUARY 2, 1743.

The redeemed are the property of the Saviour, and are self-dedicated to his service.

TO-DAY I pursued the subject of redeeming time, which I entered upon yesterday, attended with this awful circumstance, that a person known to me, who was well yesterday evening at five o'clock, died this morning before nine. This quickened me to struggle with my indisposition, which was partly the effect of walking in the wind, and of walking too fast. Nevertheless, I bless God, that towards the latter end of the discourse I found my heart much warmed, when addressing my exhortation to those who were under peculiar engagements. These, I further urged by the consideration of the dying love of Christ, and insisted upon this text at the table of the lord, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. I observed the claim entered, "Ye are not your own." We may advance that claim in the name of God upon the angels, if they are present in the assembly. We say it, and their hearts echo it back. "True,

we are his—his, that made us, and hath made us happy; his, who hath preserved us so long, and continued to us those songs which we began when the foundations of the earth were laid.” But to them we could not add, as in the following words, “Ye are bought with a price.” To us it is applicable. The apostle says not, with what a price. He needed not. Surely it must be in the mind of every Christian here. “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Christ is the price sufficient and adequate to the claim. As in Zechariah, God commissioned his prophet to demand a price. The price given was that of a slave. And he speaks with indignation: “A goodly price at which I was valued by these wretches!”* So in present circumstances, it is a goodly price indeed. Do you refuse it, when Christ says, “Poor creature! know that thou wast undone; that thou wast sold to be a bond slave; that thou wast as a dead man before the Lord; and that I redeemed thee, that I gave my blood for thee: thou mayest remember what I suffered for thee. What have I deserved?” Would any of you say, “Lord, thou hast deserved something from me, and something I will render. Thou hast deserved that I should consecrate to thee some of my time, some of my possessions; that I should give up for thee some of my corrupt affections, and observe some of thy precepts.” Christ will not have such a divided service. You must be entirely his, or he will not own you to be his at all. “Well, Lord,” would some of us say,

* The common version reads thus: “A goodly price that I was prized at of them.” Zech. vi. 13.

“I allow thy claim;—in humble contrition I am thine. I am astonished at thy grace: I know not what to say; only receive me. Do me this honour; add this further favour to all the rest, to take me, and to dispose of me as thy property;—use me for thy glory as thou pleasest. I will labour for thee; I will suffer for thee, if it be for thine honour. I will submit to what may be more painful, in some respects, than labour, or than suffering, to be laid aside, as a vessel in which thou hast no pleasure. It imports not, if I may be thine, though I may seem for the present but as a broken vessel.” This is reasonable. Well then, while God continues your abilities and capacities of service, glorify him with your bodies and with your spirits, which are the Lord’s. Body and spirit are his!—He gave his body to be a sacrifice: “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” Matt. xxvi. 38. Thus has he purchased thy soul and body. Let the faculties of the mind and the members of the body be employed for him. And let this be your concern, that Christ may in all things be glorified in you, whether by life or by death. 1 Pet. iv. 11. Let the circumstances of both be the great Lord’s of life and death. Dost thou wish it, Christian? If thou consentest, it shall undoubtedly be so. He will accept the tribute which thou bringest him, humble as it is, and worthless as it may seem, thou shalt have the honour and pleasure of glorifying God now in a certain degree, and ere long thou shalt be glorified with him. “Amen, gracious Lord,” will the Christian say; “and in token that I desire it may be so, and hope and expect that it will, I now come to thy table.”

These sentiments were expressed in a very live-

ly and affectionate prayer. But when I came to break the bread, I was taken exceedingly ill, and rendered by faintness and a pain in my stomach, in a great measure, unfit to proceed. Indeed, I was not without some thoughts, but that I might have taken my flight from the table of Christ upon earth to his presence above. Cold clammy sweats were upon me; but if, as some said, a mortal paleness seemed fixed upon my cheek, I hope I can say that glory was in my soul. I revived a little, and felt an unutterable sweetness in singing the hymn on the words of good old Simeon, as rendered by dear Dr. Watts; and I must say, that all the pleasure, which I might have had in a better state of health and spirits, in the after part of the ordinance, was far overbalanced by the unutterable delight which I enjoyed in consequence of being so interrupted. I cannot but think, that it was in some measure owing to the great fervour of my spirit in the former duties of the day, that this failure now happened, and I humbly hope that I may say, that I was in some degree consumed with the love of God. Gracious Lord, I thank thee for the visitation, and for the support under it. I thank thee that I am thine, in life or in death. And I humbly renew the solemn dedication of myself unto thee, as in a holy tranquillity of soul, and undissembled readiness to be disposed of as thou pleasest in this world, or in a better.

MEDITATION XLIV.

ON THE SACRAMENT, IN FEBRUARY, 1743.

Of the joys of the future world.

I HAD been preaching from those words in Ephesians, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church," &c. Ephesians v. 25, 26. Agreeably to this I spoke to-day from a scripture which I believe has been the subject of my meditation before, but I am not quite sure. It was, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah xxxv. 10. When the church is perfectly saved, this shall be fulfilled. Observe under what character God's people are described; whither they shall be brought, and in what manner; and how this great transaction shall end. Under what character God's people are described: "the redeemed of the Lord." Those whom he has ransomed and bought. Are we not so? This is a feast of his ransomed ones, in which the price for the ransom is commemorated. Nor would any one who did not apprehend himself in this view have any business here. It is sinners that were once enslaved and condemned, then bought by the Son of God, who are to seek their places at this board, their part in this ordinance. "Into thy hand I commit my spirit: thou hast re-

deemed me, O Lord God of truth!" Psalm xxxi. 5. "They shall return:" return from their captivity in the grave. He will say in another world, "Return, ye children of God." And they "shall come to Zion;" to the New Jerusalem, to the city of our God. Now we are travelling towards it. Now we are incorporated with that society. We have our freedom, but not our habitation there, being no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. It is that Jerusalem from above, which is the mother of us all. It is pleasant to come to Zion below; our Lord loves it. But O, how much more do we love those heavenly gates! They shall "come with singing;" making a grand procession with anthems in their mouths. What melody in each! What harmony in all! How pleasant to think of them, not singing with sorrowful and broken voices, but in a full harmonious quire! Who would not wish to have seen Moses and Aaron leading on the Israelites from Egypt with that sacred song of triumph? to have heard the poor slaves, untaught in music, unless by inspiration, and used rather to groans than songs; yet on so sublime an occasion as the deliverance of Israel and the destruction of Pharaoh, their tongues were filled with notes of triumph:—it had been pleasant. But the song of Moses and the Lamb shall be in another strain. O that we could catch a little of the echo now! And how shall it end? They shall march on to heaven? "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!" Psalm xxiv. 7. Everlasting joy is upon their heads. God pours out the oil of gladness, and its fragrance is immortal. Sorrow and sighing were once familiar, but now they are fled away, for

ever discomfited and defeated by the great Captain of our salvation and his triumphant legions; they dare not look him in the face, they dare not invade his followers for a moment. How grand and how delightful an image! And now, Lord, lead me not forth with the workers of iniquity, but with this thy people. Methinks that thou hast this day begun to fulfil this promise. I number myself among thy redeemed ones. I come to thy Zion here, I come with pleasure and delight; joy is in my heart, and a song is in my mouth. Let sorrow and sighing retire, at least for a while, and give way to that joy that becomes such a feast. And thou, sacred Spirit, shed abroad a new effusion of faith, of hope, of love, and joy in my soul. Come, Lord, for I wait on thee with expectation and delight.

MEDITATION XLV.

ON THE SACRAMENT, MARCH 11, 1744.

The Church consecrated by the sacrifice of Christ.

HAVING preached of the power of faith in our coming to God, I fixed my meditations at the Lord's table on those words in Peter; "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. I here observed the view we have of Christ. As looked upon by the generality of mankind, he is

“disallowed;” they slight him. Many openly reject his gospel, and oppose it. Others concern not themselves about it. They do not make him the foundation of their hopes. Either they have no foundation at all, no evidences for eternity, or it is some other foundation, and not Christ. But he is “chosen of God.” So chosen, that the great God has passed a decree, that if ever any sinful creature obtains salvation, it should be through Christ, and as sought by him. If ever the gospel comes to a man, Christ must be acceptable, or he shall not have eternal life. Every other foundation shall undoubtedly fail, and the hail shall sweep it away as a refuge of lies. He is also precious in the sight of God. In this view, he is called, “My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matt. iii. 17. It is pleasant to view Christ as the foundation of his church: in this view also the eyes of the Lord are upon him. He is also precious to every believer; incomparably so. And they come to him as for something that passes between Christ and the real Christian. He speaks to his Lord, speaks to him from the heart, and is built up as a spiritual house, and as lively stones. This of natural buildings would be absurd; not so in the spiritual sense. The building of the Father of spirits, is a spiritual building. Spirits are active in it. It is their language, “Lord, let me be laid as a stone in thy house, and be one of those whom thou wilt condescend to inhabit as thy temple.” The simile is then changed, and Christians are represented as a holy priesthood in this house, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ. They are priests. They shall be so above. They are so now; and, as such, holy; they desire to separate themselves

from all impurities of flesh and spirit; and they attend to offer prayers, praises, and alms-deeds. They are spiritual in all; all is done in the name and fear of God, from a true spiritual principle, which engages the heart. And they are acceptable to God; but it is all through Christ. He is the Aaron, the representative of the whole body. And they are chosen in him. And they shall at length be made priests to keep God's charge, for he will, as in the promise to Joshua, give them a place among them that stand by. Zech. iii. 7. Glorious hope! In the mean time, let us offer the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks in his name; and commemorate that great priestly act of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which we are consecrated; and that blood through which we have boldness to enter into the holy place.

MEDITATION XLVI.

ON THE SACRAMENT, APRIL 8, 1744.

Christians rejoice as they anticipate the second coming of the Saviour.

HAVING preached on those words in Jeremiah, "How shall I put thee among the children," &c. Jer. iii. 19. I introduced the ordinance with a meditation on these: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come:" 1 Cor. xi. 26; in which I mentioned two leading thoughts. There is a showing forth of the death of Christ to ourselves, to affect our own hearts; and to the world, both ene-

mies and friends. To ourselves; we represent it before our own eyes, that our thoughts may be fixed upon it, and affected with it: that Christ died; and that he died thus: that his body was broken, and that his blood was poured out. So miserable were we as to need it;—so merciful was our God as to contrive it;—so gracious was our blessed Redeemer as to submit to it. Thus, were we ransomed: thus, our best services were purchased: thus a lasting obligation was laid upon us, an everlasting obligation, which we shall never outlive in this world or in the next. We show it to ourselves in this connexion, because we desire to answer this obligation. We show it forth to others; to all; to the greatest enemies of Christ. We are not ashamed of his cross. We do not desire that his death should be forgotten. It is the language of this action, that Christ died, and we would show it forth in the midst of Jews and Mohammedans, though they should deride it. We show it forth to his friends, hoping it will strike their hearts. We call on you, who are present, to look up to it, and to consider it. This was our Saviour; and not ours alone, but we trust yours too. Do you not believe it? Do you not consider it? We also show forth his death till he come. It is an ordinance always to be continued in the church; and the thought of his coming is to be connected with it. It is an ordinance always to continue in the church. It has continued a great many ages; was instituted probably before the Sabbath, at least before that illustrious one, when the Holy Ghost descended from heaven. It will continue to the end. If it be rooted out in one church and nation, it will continue in another until the Lord's day before the re-appearance of Christ. The last day of

the Son of man upon the earth! And O! what a circumstance will that be for Christians not aware of so sudden a change! Having been at the Lord's supper on the preceding Sabbath, to see before the next our Lord Jesus Christ descending in the clouds of heaven, and to be caught up to meet him. Surely the pleasure of that interview will be augmented by the communion they have had with him on such an occasion as this. We are also to consider this ordinance in connexion with the view of his coming. He will surely and quickly come! Many of our fellow communicants he has come to take to himself. Their places are empty; or rather, we fill them. So will ours be emptied, and filled up, I trust, by successors. O that there may still be here a seed to serve Christ, when you and I are in our graves. Our Lord Jesus Christ will come to judgment, and we shall be "gathered up together to him." It will, perhaps, be thirteen or fourteen hundred years or more before the millennium will be;—but Christ will then remember us; and remember his servants who have already been dead almost two thousand years;—nay, the people of God, who have been dead much longer. He will lose none, but raise up all; Christ cannot forget us, and although our names be forgotten in the church below, they shall live with him. O blessed day! In the expectation of this, let us, in obedience to his command, do our part this day towards worthily transmitting this blessed memorial.

I had afterwards many addresses to the spectators; praying for the absent, and especially for those who were either confined at home, or absent in foreign lands.

MEDITATION XLVII.

REMARKS ON WHAT PASSED ON A SACRAMENT DAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1747.

Love and grace of Christ in suffering for guilty man.

I MUST record this day as one of the most blessed of my life. God was pleased to meet me in my secret retirement in the morning, and poured into my soul such a flood of consolation in the exercises of faith and love, as I was hardly able to sustain. It would have been a relief to me to have been able even to have uttered strong cries of joy. O, how did I then wish for a melodious voice, and how gladly could I have made earth and heaven re-echo with praise! Family devotion was unutterably sweet; and although the pleasure of my sermon was much interrupted by an accidental disorder that happened in my throat while I was speaking, yet I bless God, that the sacramental attendance and the evening services were all beyond expression sweet. My soul was full of God, and of heaven.

The scripture on which the meditation turned was that in 1 Pet. iii. 18, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." I cannot express the view which was given me of the infinite love and grace of Christ in suffering for our cause "the just for the unjust," which last circumstance I was enabled to own before God with great brokenness of heart and unfeigned humility. I explained the view I then had of the sufferings of Christ for us; the righteous instead of the un-

righteous; who thus put himself between the sword of the Divine justice and our souls. I then related the story of the poor negro woman who saved Captain Falconer, then her husband, by putting herself betwixt him and the weapon of his enemy, and receiving the blow at the expense of her own life; which appeared to me a very affecting circumstance.

It was that we might be introduced to God, that he thus suffered. God will not see us, will not have any intercourse with us, until Christ undertakes to introduce us; then we are welcome—then the Father smiles: and this is actually done. Now we that were once afar off are brought nigh; are near him as his children; are the objects of his love, and brought near to be separated no more. What shall separate us from the love of God? Nothing can but sin. The rebels were put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: his Divine nature raised his human from the grave, and now he ever lives and reigns.

In breaking the bread, I had many sweet meditations, and particularly on those words, “I will raise him up at the last day.” John vi. 39, 40. And once more, in the compass of a few verses, “I will raise him up at the last day.” O how delightful! our resurrection is secure; we shall be raised up with, and like our Lord: he shall present us together with himself. My soul was even transported with the hope. This is the promise that was sealed to me so powerfully in my secret retirement, that it seemed as if I were just going to receive the full extent of the blessing, and almost as if the day of the Lord were come.

My heart was strongly drawn out in prayer to God for my fellow communicants, and for the

spectators; as it was also in repeating a very affectionate sermon from Christ's invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. I hope that God blessed it as the means of good to some persons; and I was particularly desirous that it might be so to Miss Saunders, the amiable daughter of my once honoured and beloved friend, for whom I had the highest regard. Providence has brought her for awhile under my roof, in circumstances that demand my peculiar concern, as she has fallen into a sad negligence with regard to religion. My design is, if possible, to draw her to Christ; and I am in great hopes that God will favour me so far as to make me the means of some good to her soul. There is one token for good; which is, that I have perhaps hardly ever enjoyed more of the presence of God, especially in family prayer, than I have done since she came into the family. I would humbly hope also, that God is beginning to work, in some degree, upon the hearts of some of my younger pupils intended for secular life. On the whole, although I have a great many circumstances to lament in the congregation, I have a secret hope that God, who thus quickens my heart, will in due time quicken his work; and that, when he has exercised my faith awhile longer, he will appear to build up our ruins, and renew the face of the church, as he has in some measure done that of the Academy, by an accession of several new pupils, and those very promising and delightful. At least, I hope that he will revive religion, more and more, in my heart; and although I have not been without some melancholy forebodings as to some future trials that may come upon me, yet I desire to leave myself entirely in

his hands ; and, confident of his gracious support, I would fear none of the things that I may suffer.

MEDITATION XLVIII.

HINTS OF MEDITATIONS ON THE SACRAMENT, FEBRUARY, 1749.

The petitions of a Christian stated and answered.

THE subject of my meditation was, “What is thy petition, and what is thy request?” Esth. vii. 2. Were we at the banquet of wine of a king, and might imagine him to be addressing that question to each;—should we be at a loss for an answer? No: Lord, that our sins may be forgiven;—all of them; those since we first entered into covenant with thee, and those since our last covenant engagements. God answers, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Heb. viii. 12. And what further?—Lord, that all remaining sin may be rooted out, not only from our actions and words, but from our thoughts. He will subdue our iniquities; he will cast sin into the depths of the sea. “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Rom. vi. 14. And what further?—Lord, that our souls may be animated in thy service; that we may have wisdom, and courage, and perseverance. “I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.” Zech. x. 12. And any thing further?—That we may be enabled to bear up under the burdens and afflictions of life; not be dismayed and terrified,

but remain calm and composed. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." Isaiah xliii. 2. Let not our Lord be angry, and we will speak but once more.—That thou wilt support us in death, and receive us to glory. This is the great promise, that, after passing through the dark valley, he will give unto us eternal life. All the rest have a reference to this. "Begotten again to a lively hope," 1 Pet. i. 3; which God that cannot lie has promised. Lord, I have no more to ask for myself, but for others I have. "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Gen. xvii. 18; my companions; my children; every one of them, from the eldest to the youngest. I cannot say that it is an absolute promise; but he hath said "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed." Gen. xvii. 7. Confirm, O Lord, the pleasing hope, and accept my grateful vows for the honour of thy name. O Lord, extend thy gospel here, although perhaps it may not be immediately among those whom we are most concerned for, yet, surely, upon the whole, we have that comfortable promise, The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth—a seed shall remain to serve him. Isaiah xi. 9; Psalm xxii. 30. Lord, we believe that thou hast granted our petitions: we will turn them into praise; we will go away as those that have this cheerful and comfortable hope.

Invitations were then given to the aged and the young. Here are seasons now of gathering, for the fruit is ripe!—and of hope, for others are coming forward with the favourable gale of youth: may they steer into this peaceful harbour.

MEDITATION XLIX.

HINTS OF THE SACRAMENT, IN MARCH, 1749.

Christians are inoffensive, and benevolent in thought and deed.

HAVING preached on God's gathering together in one all things in Jesus Christ, I added a meditation on these words, "That we should be to the praise of his glory." Eph. i. 12. I considered how we might be so. By celebrating his praise with our voices—and by showing forth his praise in our lives. I touched in the former on the error of those who deny singing, and pressed the propriety of allowing a proper proportion of praise in public worship at all times, especially on Sabbath and sacrament days. O that God would give more of his Spirit to excite praise! I then insisted on the duty of showing it forth by an inoffensive, exemplary, and useful conversation. *Inoffensive*: observe what it is that gives offence and occasions reproach. Intemperance; being absent from ordinances; covetousness; pride; censoriousness. I then urged an exemplary behaviour, so that men might learn by us, and so that, if we were in a country where our language could not be understood, yet that by our good behaviour the natives might learn how they should behave themselves to us. Endeavour to be useful;—do good by diffusive bounty. Many poor want your assistance: give it to them. Do not indulge temptations of a sophistical nature, and so, instead of relieving the poor, find out artful reasons why they should not be relieved. Think of good to be done to the souls of companions; of children; of servants; of friends:

abound in this work, and remember that your opportunities lie but within a little space.

I said but little, particularly in breaking the bread. Before giving the cup, I urged them to lift up their hearts to God, that if he offered it they might see it as offered by his hand, and might take it. May the mercy of the Lord pardon those who neglect his grace.

MEDITATION L.

HINTS OF THE SACRAMENT, IN APRIL, 1749.

Christ will not desert his people in times of sorrow and of trial.

I HAD some remarkable enjoyment yesterday and this morning, and a charming season in attending Mr. Robinson, after preaching from Isaiah xliii. 1, 2, "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee." I introduced the Lord's supper with Isaiah xlix. 13, "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted." The words express a most affectionate rapture; and as if the prophet was not himself sufficiently able to express his joy, he calls upon inanimate nature. Let the mountains re-echo it downwards to the earth, and upwards to heaven, and thus let it excite our songs. Let celestial music in all its charms be employed to celebrate it. To celebrate what?—the deliverance from Babylon? If it were so, how poor to our triumph!—to come back to an earthly Canaan, where some of their

fathers, some of their grandfathers had lived; where so many risks were to be run, and so many conveniences were to be resigned, that the greater part, when they had liberty to do so, still chose to reside at Babylon. If those who returned had occasion to weep the diminished glory of their temple, how much more cause have we!

“The Lord hath comforted his people.” He has a people; and if he sees them in places that need comfort, he provides it. Who else could have comforted but the Lord? Had we understood our true case, we might have derived joy from every circumstance that had given us affliction. Was it bodily pain, gout, or stone? could it be scarcely endured only for a few days? O, what would it be to endure such anguish and agony for ever! If it be grievous to support the distress of a wounded spirit but for a little while, what are the agonies of eternal despair! If the loss of a friend be grievous, what must be the everlasting loss and absence of God! If I grieve to see a dear child in pain, what must it be to behold all that are dear to me in torment! O, what must the situation of my mind be, if I can behold this with a strange kind of pleasure, rather than with sympathy! If the insults of enemies be in any degree grievous, what must the scorn and insults of infernal spirits be, wherewith they shall seize me as their helpless prey, and cry, “There shall be no deliverer!” Thus might we have argued, had not redemption taken place; and what, then, should comfort us, but this, “I, even I, am he,” saith the Lord, “that comforteth you?” Isaiah li. 12. I speak forgiveness and peace; and then, who shall give trouble? He speaks it through Christ; and by this memorial of the Saviour’s love, he will have mercy on

his afflicted servants. His people may be afflicted, as in my text, they may pass through the fire and the water; but still He has mercy; he will support them, and that wonderfully. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Psalm cxii. 4. Have we not experienced it? Have we not found the blessed interposition, when He has commanded it?—when, bewildered in midnight obscurity, we have perceived a sudden light arise in the mind, we knew not whence, or how, and as if day was born from the womb of night! He will deliver them certainly, and speedily;—deliver them from death;—for what is human life, and how many years can remain of it? He will deliver them from all their afflictions: He will wipe off every tear; He will not merely put off their sackcloth, in which they lay down in the dress of death, but he will gird them with gladness. Therefore, O Sion, sing of his goodness. Say not, my God has forsaken me. Say rather, that he will never forsake me; he will multiply his comforts until he completes my deliverance.

In the administration of the elements, I observed—What if Christ were here in person, and said, "Let all that love me, all that trust in me, all that believe in me, and obey me, come down and take their seats at the table, and let the rest stay." What would you answer? Perhaps, "Lord, I desire to love thee. Lord, take away every thing in my heart that opposes." Well, all shall be well. That desire shows that thou art his, and that thou hast a right to be here, whatever thou mayest conceive of the matter.

MEDITATION LI.

ON THE SACRAMENT, APRIL 8, 1750.

The Christian questioned as to the charges which the Saviour might have against him.

I INTRODUCED the ordinance with these words, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee." Rev. ii. 4. I—who? Our Lord Jesus Christ, who holds the stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden candlesticks—he had something against them; though their labour, patience, and zeal are so honourably commemorated. We may emulate them, and say, O that it were with us as with them! Yet Christ had something against them. Then we should surely inquire, whether he has not something against us. And what can we imagine it to be? Is it with regard to secret devotion? not that we omit it; but then, that it is carelessly performed, hurried into hasty moments. Is it in our family? not that we are guilty of the great wickedness of omitting prayer; but then, it has degenerated into a form. Is it that we have little concern about the souls committed to our care—our children, our servants, or our friends? Is it that we are wanting in charity? whether in candour, by finding fault with the characters of others, and presuming to censure them, when perhaps they are better than ourselves? or that we want charity to the bodies of others—that we have not set apart a portion of our substance, as many do; that we do not look into their cases, that we do not care to hear of their sorrows, but are ingenious to find out excuses for blaming, instead of pitying and reliev-

ing them? Is it attachment to this world; either to its honours, its profits, or its pleasures? Is it the loss of our first love? How unreasonable! why should we love Christ less than we did when he first formed an acquaintance with our souls?—has he not rather bestowed more and greater favours upon us? Well then, let us own that, whatever he has against us, we are inexcusable.

And to you, spectators; has he not something against you!—even this single circumstance, that you attend not upon his table, although you have had so many engagements and invitations; although so many have testified to the refreshments they have received, which testimony we now repeat. What, then, is to be done? If thy brother has aught against thee, go and be reconciled; much more is it to be reconciled here. But you need not go, for, lo, he is here! Pour out your hearts before him, and say, Blessed Jesus, I repent; forgive me, and give me grace for the future to walk more consistently with thee. If thou hast any thing more against me, Lord, make me to know it, and I will gladly renounce it. Lord, I can relish nothing while thou hast aught against me.



MEDITATION LII.

HINTS OF MEDITATIONS AT THE SACRAMENT, OCTOBER 7, 1750.

The believer rendered ultimately secure from death and sin

I INTRODUCED the ordinance with a meditation on Jer. i. 20, “The iniquity of Israel shall be sought

for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." A promise relating to the re-admission of the Israelites into the charter of salvation, and therefore common to Christians. God will pardon them more fully. It implies, that if sin were sought for, there should be no trace found. This may refer to the mark of the curse upon them, when the blood of Christ lay on them, and on their children. God would do it entirely away; and so he does with respect to all believers. As yet we see not all things put under his feet, although it is said they shall be. We see not all the sins of Judah and of Israel done away—or of God's people; they are under some remaining tokens of sin; and of these, are all distempers, all the deaths of children, and all other calamities. Yet soon shall their separate spirits be dismissed; and then, with regard to them, there will not be a mark of sin remaining! God never joined a rational soul to a body for a punishment: it was a token of his favour, to bestow instruments of action, and of happiness. Death never came otherwise than as the wages of sin, actual or imputed; therefore we must consider souls in separate abodes, even in abodes of glory, as under some remembrance of sin; that is only to be done away by the resurrection. Never did any sinful creature appear in the likeness of such bodies; we are not then, as servants of Christ, in the likeness of sinful, but of sinless flesh. Death and sin shall then be swallowed up in victory! And God says, "I will pardon those whom I reserve;" intimating, that it was in consequence of his reservation that they were pardoned. He reserves them as a little remnant from destruction:

except the Lord had chosen them they would have been cut off as was Sodom, where there was no remnant. He preserves them as a remnant remaining according to the election of grace. We are a remnant. We might have been cut off unconverted. God has spared, has reserved us. Adore his name, and trust in him to abolish all remaining memorials of sin. And, O! rejoice in the pardon. Blessed is the man whose iniquity is pardoned. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. iv. 7, 8. Is not ours? Are we not receiving the pardon? Let us trust in Christ. And, O, let us rejoice!

After breaking the bread, in which I repeated the heads of the sermon, I had an affecting representation of my heart's desire, and prayed for every one of my people, and for each of my hearers.

MEDITATION LIII.

AT THE SACRAMENT, JUNE 2, 1751.*

Of the Christian's self-dedication to the Saviour.

HAVING preached from these words, in Hebrews, "Ye are come to the general assembly, &c., Heb. xii. 22, 23, I introduced the Lord's supper with Isa. xlv. 3, 5, "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.—One shall say I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name

* Dr. Doddridge died in his forty-ninth year, October 27, 1751.

of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Concerning this, I observed, what is the general character of believers, and the particular circumstances of those to whom the promise is made. It is given to Christians, saying, "I am the Lord's;" to those who confess that they are his property, and that at his disposal they are willing entirely and absolutely to be. "I am the Lord's:" I, and all that I have; every possession; every relative hope; every concern: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matt. xxvi. 39. "Another shall call himself by the name of Jacob."—What! although it be a despised remnant; although there should not be one rich, polite, or learned person belonging to it, yet are they God's people;—they are the seed of those who love and serve him, and who delight themselves in him. A third shall "subscribe with his hand to the Lord." This some then present actually did. It signifies giving a public token of devotedness to God, and we do the same thing when we come to the Lord's table.

In breaking the bread, I observed, Here is the effect of the sacrifice. What was the cause? The pouring forth of the Spirit and the blessing, for all things are of God. Let us own the cause wherever we see the effect, and look to the cause whenever we desire to see it, and be more earnest with God for the pouring out of his Spirit. Consider this text as especially illustrated in reference to those who are the seed and offspring of the church; for among them generally the seed of the future church is to be found, which may be an encouragement to parents, and children, and to ministers. Let us thank God, wherever we see it, and bless God, that he has thus far heard our prayers, and

succeeded our pious cares. And where we do not as yet see it, let us wait and hope; and renew our supplications in favour of our remaining seed, and for each other; and especially for those who have not as yet seen any thing of this kind, which must be to them a source of great grief:—but let us here give a solemn charge that all walk suitably.

At the conclusion, I spoke of the shedding of the blood of Christ; and before taking the cup, I gave a solemn address to Him as holding the seven stars in his hand, and walking among the seven golden candlesticks. Rev. i. 20.

THE END.



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